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Wednesday's Gospel: A Mother's Love

Gospel for Wednesday in the
2nd Week of Lent, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 20:17-28*)

And as Jesus was going up to
Jerusalem, he took the twelve
disciples aside, and on the way he
said to them,

“Behold, we are going up to
Jerusalem; and the Son of man will
be delivered to the chief priests and
scribes, and they will condemn him
to death, and deliver him to the
Gentiles to be mocked and scourged

and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him, with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, “What do you want?”

She said to him, “Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.”

But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.”

He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Commentary

In today's Gospel passage, the mother of James and John, two of the apostles closest to Jesus, daringly confronts the Master. She kneels before him and makes a bold request: “Command that these two

sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom” (v. 21).

Although our Lord’s reply might seem a bit harsh, we can imagine his heart reacting with tenderness to the mother’s request. He is pleased by her daring and responds with a new question, to which the mother and her sons answer affirmatively.

Jesus, sensing an overly “human” aspiration, corrects her and stresses the primacy of God’s will and the attitude of service needed by those who are “higher up.”

Today we contemplate the courage of this woman who had no qualms about showing our Lord with simplicity the deepest longing in her heart – a request not for herself, but for her children, whom she loved much more than herself.

How many generous responses by so many men and women who have left everything to follow the Master have been preceded and accompanied by their parents' generosity in opening their hearts to let their children follow Jesus wherever He wanted to lead them!

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