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Saturday's Gospel: Serving in order to Reign with Him

Gospel for Saturday in the 25th
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 9:43b-45*)

While they were all marveling at everything he did, Jesus said to his disciples,

“Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men.”

But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from

them, that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Commentary

Jesus is admired wherever he goes. People crowd around to hear him, to receive a word of encouragement, a look of tenderness. They bring sick people to him so that he can cure them, people possessed by demons so that he can free them. His fame even reaches beyond the borders of Galilee and Judea.

The disciples would have been deeply moved and filled with pride. Moreover they themselves have shared in his mission: they have proclaimed the kingdom of God and healed the sick.

Hence the words we see addressed to them today deeply shocked them: “the Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men.”

During the previous days, Jesus had already begun to openly announce what will happen to him in Jerusalem: that he will be rejected by the elders and high priests, that he will be put to death and rise on the third day (cf. *Lk 9:22*). But they refused to accept it: they didn't understand it, and failed to grasp the meaning of his words. They were even afraid to ask him about it.

The disciple were dreaming of the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel, of sitting at the right and left hand of the Lord in his glory. They argue about which of them will be the greatest.

But Jesus begins to identify himself with the suffering servant of God, the mysterious figure in Isaiah who

suffers and dies. Serving is the true way to reign.

God's logic is always different than ours, as God himself revealed through Isaiah: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways" (cf. *Is* 55:8). That is why following our Lord requires a deep conversion, a change in our way of thinking and living. It requires opening our heart and listening, allowing ourselves to be illumined and transformed interiorly.

As Pope Benedict XVI said: "A key point in which God and man differ is pride: in God there is no pride, for he is all plenitude and is wholly oriented to loving and giving life. But in we human beings pride is deeply rooted and requires constant vigilance and purification. We, who are small, aspire to appear great, to be among the first, whereas God who

is truly great is not afraid of humbling himself and putting himself last” (*Angelus*, 23 September 2012).

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