

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time-B

Mark 9:30-37

Dear Friends,

Our Catholic Faith is often described as a service from the cradle to the grave. Actually, we are very emphatic that it starts before the cradle at the moment of conception. I think we all have difficulty with this universal demand of our faith.

When I was eleven, my first nephew was born. In the next several years many more nieces and nephews followed. Soon I discovered that I really enjoyed playing with the children especially from the ages of three to five. I used to tell my sisters and sisters-in-law that I did not think that the children were human till they were three. I definitely was not into babies. Over the years, I have improved but not all that much in my view of babies.

On the other end of the spectrum, I need to really push myself to visit the sick when they do not recognize anybody.

In both situations, the families are inspiring in their love and service to these helpless human beings.

In today's Gospel, Jesus is using his second prediction of his passion and death to teach us that there are no "**nobodies**" in God's eyes.

At the time of Jesus, a child was truly a "**nobody**" for everybody except the family. The child had no rights, recognition or voice in anything. Jesus turns that view upside down in his Gospel message today. He not only puts his arms around the child in a tender embrace of recognition but says, "**Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the one who sent me.**" (Mk 9:37)

In this statement and loving embrace, Jesus is teaching us that there are no "**nobodies**" in God's eyes. We need to see that all humanity, in all its incredible different expressions, is an image of God. Therefore, if we wish to be a leader, we need to celebrate this divine manifestation in all by a service that makes us a servants of all.

Jesus is showing us the way by his faithful surrender on the way to Jerusalem. He asks us, his followers and disciples, to recognize and respond to God's presence in all our brothers and sisters whether they are in diapers or in prison, whether in a coma or addiction. Our call is to a life of service and love for all.

We all have our own list of "**nobodies**". Jesus is asking us to open our eyes to see the wonderful presence of God hidden in our midst and on our list.