

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY OT-B

There is a short but significant section left out between last week's and this week's reading of the Gospel.

In it, Jesus tells the Twelve for the third time that he is going to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and rise.

And just as they did twice before, the apostles totally miss the point!

On the first occasion when Jesus predicted his passion and death, Peter stood up and said to Jesus, "God forbid!"

Jesus turned to Peter and said: "Get behind me Satan! You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

Then Jesus declared: "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it."

In the Gospel four weeks ago, Jesus again predicted his passion, death, and resurrection.

And, how did the Twelve respond?

They argued among themselves about who was the greatest.

Jesus had to tell them: "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all."

Which brings us to today's Gospel, before which Jesus tells the Twelve for the third time that he is going to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and rise.

So what happens? James and John approach Jesus and say: "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

Really? Could you imagine me walking into the Bishop's office and saying that to him?

And what do James and John ask for?

They want the privileged seats next to Jesus when he comes into his glory!

We really have to admire the patience of Jesus.

If I was in his sandals, I would have probably zapped the two brothers with a lightning bolt or something.

Jesus then sums up his mission by saying:

"For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus came to serve the mission the Father gave him: to draw all people back into communion with God.

This mission of Jesus is the mission of the Church; it is our mission.

In order to reflect upon this mission and how to best live out this mission in the 21st century, Pope Francis has initiated a two-year Synod process involving the whole Church throughout the world.

The word "synod" means "to walk together."

And so the Synod process involves giving people the opportunity to speak with and listen to one another.

Our local participation in the Synod begins (tomorrow/ today) with a liturgy celebrated by Bishop McClory followed by a time for discussion and discernment.

Our Diocese will be building upon our recent experience of the Synod that was convoked by Bishop Hying four years ago.

In the months ahead there will be other opportunities for your involvement.

Together let us all pray for openness to the voice of the Holy Spirit who is always calling the Church to grow as servant followers of Jesus dedicated to his mission of making disciples.