

Last week we had a Gospel reading from the Gospel of Mark that contained what is often referred to as “*The First Prediction of the Passion.*” This prediction took place in last week’s Gospel reading after Jesus had asked His disciples two questions and after St. Peter had stated that Jesus is the Christ the Savior of the world. After it is firmly established who Jesus is, He then informs His disciples that he must suffer and die and that He will rise on the third day. St. Peter reacts to this news by wishing to reject the suffering that Jesus is to undertake. Jesus points out to St. Peter that he is not viewing things as God does, but as human beings do. St. Peter in last week’s reading reacts in a very human way not in a God like manner. His reaction is understandable and is relatable for all of us. None of us would want someone we care for to suffer in anyway. But Jesus reminds St. Peter, the disciples and us, that God’s ways are not our ways, but it is through His ways that we find eternal salvation.

This week we have “*The Second Prediction of the Passion.*” Between the first and second prediction of the passion of Christ, we have the Transfiguration of Jesus and the healing of a boy. After Peter, James and John see Jesus in all His glory and hear the voice of God saying, “*this is my beloved Son, listen to Him.*” Then the disciples of Jesus witness the healing of a boy possessed by a mute spirit, as Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit. After these two events Jesus informs His disciples for the second time that in time, He will have to suffer death and will rise on the third day. After the second time the disciples are informed of Jesus’ pending death, St. Peter and his fellow disciples react in a far different way than they did the first time. This time their reaction is very different in many ways instead of St. Peter speaking with Jesus and informing Him that he does not want Him to suffer, this time St. Peter and the other disciples argue among themselves who is the greatest. It is possible that this time the disciples on hearing about Jesus’ pending death and resurrection, they were just in denial. So being in denial and maybe not fully understanding Jesus’ prediction, they chose to focus on a very human thing, determining who among them is the greatest or most important. Jesus informs His disciples that if they wish to be first, they must be last and be the servant of all. Today as followers of Christ we must be willing to not look out for ourselves, rather we must look out for others.

In the Gospel of Mark there is “*The Third Prediction of the Passion,*” this final prediction by Jesus of His passion takes place in chapter 10:32-45. This final prediction is not found in the Sunday readings but is found on the 8<sup>th</sup> Week of Ordinary Time. The last time that we had this Gospel reading was on May 26, 2021. In this reading Jesus and the disciples are on their way up to Jerusalem. On the journey, Jesus takes the 12 Apostles aside and He informs the 12 of His pending death. After this third and final prediction of His Passion, James, and John the sons of Zebedee make a request of Jesus. Their request is that they will be on either side of Jesus when He enters His glory. James and John are looking for places of honor and when the other Apostles hear of their request, they become indignant with James and John. Jesus then summons the 12 and reminds them that whoever wishes to be first among them, must be willing to be a slave to all. We must be willing to help others on their path to Christ, to lift them up and not tear them down.

In all three of these predictions of Jesus’ pending death, He takes the opportunity to have a teachable moment with His disciples. In today’s Gospel reading that contains the 2<sup>nd</sup> prediction, but also in the Gospel readings that contain the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> predictions of the Passion

of Christ we see the humanity of the followers of Christ. We also see the teachable moment that is present due to the humanity that is present. In our humanity, in our shortcomings there is a teachable moment for us also. May we all learn from our shortcoming and our mistakes, may we in these moments discover Jesus Christ, teaching and guiding us.