

Can You Drink the Cup?

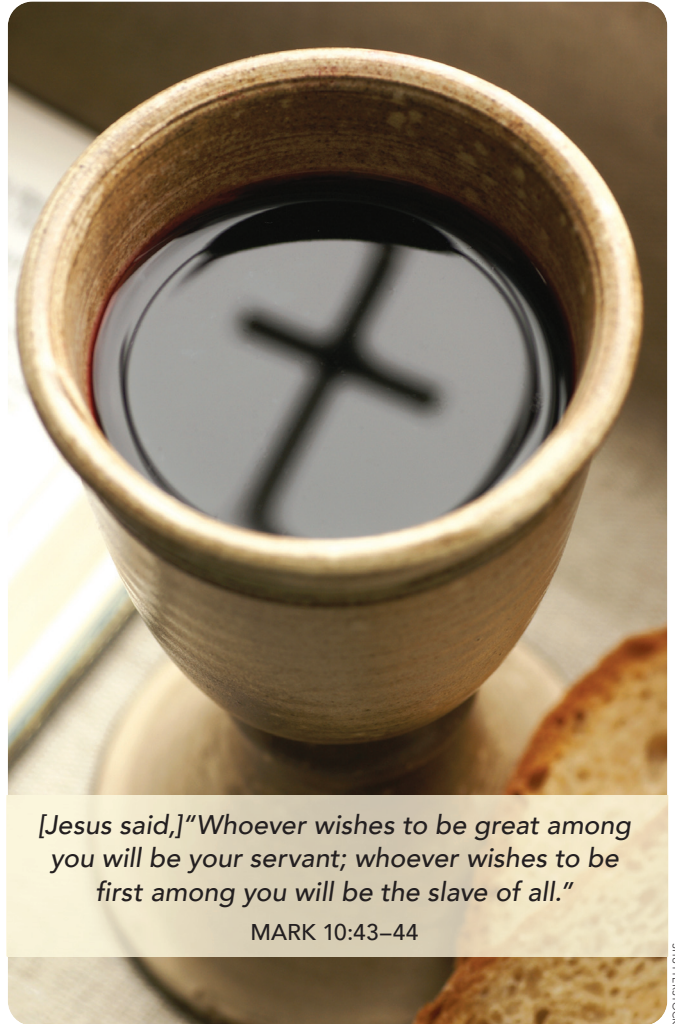
That is the question in today's Gospel that Jesus posed after James and John, two of his closest followers, asked for places of honor. They wanted to be recognized for their loyalty. Don't we all? Jesus asks them: "Can you drink the cup?" (Mark 10:38). Can you pay the price? And they both say: "We can" (10:39). Such confidence and self-assurance!

This is a Sunday that focuses on hardship—not the hardship that comes from the burdens of life itself, such as economic distress, racial and gender bias, or the loss of loved ones. Jesus was certainly concerned about these. However, today's readings have a specific focus. He asks: "Can you drink the cup that I drink?" Can you face and endure what I must? Can you follow me to suffering?

Isaiah refers to the servant of the Lord, that mysterious individual who suffers at the hands of others precisely because of his loyalty. However, his suffering is not in vain: "Because of his anguish...my servant, the just one, shall justify the many" (53:11). The spirit of this servant lives on in many stories about Jesus. It certainly does this Sunday. Like the servant, Jesus will suffer for the sake of others. How ready are James and John, you and I, for such a role?

Jesus then turns the values of society upside down. You want to be great? Then you have to serve others. You want to be first? Then, for the sake of others, you have to put yourself last. To follow Jesus means to follow him even through suffering. "Can you drink the cup?"

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA



[Jesus said,] "Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all."

MARK 10:43–44

FOR *Reflection*

- * Think of times when the welfare of another made you forget about yourself.
- * Do you always seek praise? Are you indignant when others are praised? What can you do about this?

Dear Padre,

Can a minister of holy Communion who visits hospitals bless a doctor? I was recently asked to do this. I didn't know how to say no, so I said a prayer over him even though I'm not ordained. Was that OK?

You did the right thing. The Church's *Book of Blessings* gives guidelines for a variety of blessings, some of which may be given by laypeople (see page xxviii). For example, parents may bless their children. Baptized laypeople

who carry out functions on behalf of the Church may also give blessings: catechists may bless their students, and eucharistic ministers who visit the sick may bless them.

Laypeople may give various other blessings, including blessing the sick, food, a new home, seeds at planting time, and throats on the feast of St. Blaise. A layperson may distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday, though the actual blessing of the ashes is reserved for the clergy. Also reserved for

the ordained are blessings of liturgical vessels and parishioners entering ministry as readers, altar servers, ministers of holy Communion, or musicians. Blessings of the cathedra (the bishop's chair in the cathedral church) and the consecration of the sacred chrism are reserved for bishops.

If you're trained to minister in the hospital and are there with the approval of your pastor and the hospital's pastoral team, you can give blessings. The *Book of Blessings* has texts to guide your words.

Fr. John Schmidt, CSsR / Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org



ONS PHOTO/NICK OXFORD, REUTERS

A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

The way of service is the most effective antidote against the disease of seeking first place....Therefore, as disciples of Christ, let us receive this Gospel passage as a call to conversion, in order to witness with courage and generosity a Church that bows at the feet of the least, in order to serve them with love and simplicity.

ANGELUS, OCTOBER 21, 2018

Calendar

Monday

OCTOBER 18

St. Luke, Evangelist

2 Tm 4:10–17b

Lk 10:1–9

Tuesday

OCTOBER 19

Sts. John de Brébeuf

and Isaac Jogues,

Priests, and

Companions, Martyrs

Rom 5:12, 15b,

17–19, 20b–21

Lk 12:35–38

Wednesday

OCTOBER 20

Weekday

Rom 6:12–18

Lk 12:39–48

Thursday

OCTOBER 21

Weekday

Rom 6:19–23

Lk 12:49–53

Friday

OCTOBER 22

Weekday

Rom 7:18–25a

Lk 12:54–59

Saturday

OCTOBER 23

Weekday

Rom 8:1–11

Lk 13:1–9

Sunday

OCTOBER 24

*Thirtieth Sunday
in Ordinary Time*

Jer 31:7–9

Heb 5:1–6

Mk 10:46–52

