

A Short Teaching on Being Child  
by Deacon Gerry Palermo

Greetings on this Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: Wis 2:12, 17-20; Jas 3:16-4:3; Mk 9:30-37

In today's Gospel Jesus reveals for the second time his passion of the cross to come. The first time Peter took a severe rebuke. This time, no one said a thing. Instead, they debated who was greatest among the Twelve. Pretty big difference between Jesus' revelation and the topic of the day. The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.... (Mk 9:31).

Topic of that day: which of us is the most powerful, the most important, who's the highest priority among The Twelve (Mk 9:34).

Topic of our day: War. Making war. Savoring war. Glamorizing war. Rumors of war. Promise of war. Preemptive war. War for war. New war. Old war. Good war. Mistaken war. We are warmongers. Obsessed with war, leverage and power. The world is filled with refugees, the despondent, the hopeless... we put 10 men on stage and see who can wage the greatest war.

Peacemaker, ha! Let us beset the just one, because he is obnoxious to us; he sets himself against our doings, reproaches us for transgressions of the law and charges us with violations of our training (Wis 2:12). The Pope visits Cuba and he is derided!

Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from? Is it not from your passions that make war within your members? (Jas 4:1).

Jesus instructs ... 'Taking a child, he placed it in the their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them, "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: 36-37).

The child. Who is the child? We do not know age or gender. We only know to receive into ones arms (to protect and care for) is the crucial part as it is the servant nature of God.

But I ask you: At what age are you no longer a child? You always and forever are a child. No matter how old, hurt, scared, scarred... if you can envision that Jesus wants you to hold an innocent 5 year old, you are closer to understanding that he wants you to see every person as a 5 year old to be held and comforted. If you understand that, war becomes the avoidable horror it is.

Peace be with you.

Deacon Gerry