

those whom he will call to eternal life he will say: "I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Those who will hear these words directed to them will be those who did not even try to be *malakas* with Christ, and so they will be surprised and say: "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick and in prison and go to see you?" And the Lord will answer: "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." On the other hand, those who were not consistent in service but thought they were *malakas* with Christ, will hear these words: "Go away from me, with your curse upon you . . . For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome; naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me . . . In so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me" (See Mt 2, 31-46).

Service is the measure of greatness in the kingdom of heaven. In the gospel story today, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, tried to be *malakas* with Christ. They had to be taught that greatness in the kingdom of God is not a question of *palakasan* but a question of service. Like James and John, many of us have to learn the lesson that there is no need to try to be *malakas* with Christ. All that is necessary to be great in the kingdom of heaven is to become the servant of all.

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost (Oct. 25)
Mk 10, 46-52

The Persistent Demonstrator

Demonstrations — one-man demonstrations! Did this thought not occur to you upon hearing the story of the gospel today? The demon-

strator in our story is a blind man, and like most demonstrators he called attention to his cause by shouting. There are also anti-demonstrators in our story: those who scolded the blind man and told him to keep quiet. Now here is the special twist in our story: Jesus is at the receiving end of the demonstration. This, perhaps, is a source of consolation or reassurance for those who have been the object of demonstrations. But let them also learn a lesson. Jesus did not just ignore the persistent demonstrator. He agreed to have a meeting with him and ask: "What do you want me to do for you?"

Our attention now goes to the demonstrator himself. He is respectful. He addresses Jesus with the honorific title, "Rabboni". He does not make a demand, but a petition. He is not distrustful, but has great faith. Under these circumstances, is it surprising that our story has a happy ending?

We are all called upon to be persistent demonstrators, of the kind portrayed in the gospel story. We are blinded by a lot of prejudices, misconceptions, antagonisms. We must seek help, even by drastic means. Even when others try to calm down one voice of our conscience, let it shout, and shout even louder. Let us not lose hope. And Christ will give us light.