

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost (Oct. 18)
Mk 10, 35-45 (or shorter: 10, 42-45)

No Need to Be "Malakas"

Some people think that parents who have a son in the priesthood or in the Seminary, or a daughter in the religious life, must be very *malakas* with God. You hear them say to such parents: "I envy you. You are now sure of your salvation!"

But is the pursuit of salvation a system of *palakasan*? Certainly not! It is the opposite system, the system of *SERVICE*. The example was set by the founder of Christianity himself, who "did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Many Christians are not sufficiently aware that service to others is necessary for eternal salvation. They think it is sufficient to become *malakas* with the Lord by offering him flowers, lighting some candles, taking care of the decorations for processions, joining associations and pious movements, giving gifts to priests and nuns, making Novenas, having Masses offered, etc. etc. But Our Lord frowns upon anything motivated by the intention of being *malakas*, to the exclusion of disposing oneself for service.

Not *lakas* or "pull", but charity, achieves results in the kingdom of heaven. Charity is not a simple sentiment that moves you to dole-out something for others. It is the gift of self to God and to others by means of *service* in the name of Christ. Service, therefore, is necessary for salvation. "Christians should be taught that they do not live for themselves alone, but, according to the demands of the new law of charity, every man must administer to others the grace he has received. In this way all will discharge in a Christian manner their duties within the community of men" (Vatican II, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, 6).

When the Son of Man comes to judge mankind on the last day, he will not ask you how many novenas you made, how many candles you lit, how many priests and nuns you count as your friends. To

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-