

## PASTOR'S MESSAGE FOR SEPT 19<sup>TH</sup> 2021

Greeting to everyone!

After more than a year, the students have returned to in-person classes. I guess it is a big mix of feelings and thoughts, which must include gladness to see friends, to share with others, to relate stories about the experiences we have faced during the pandemic. Some people recognize how God, family and friends have been with them during this time. Others might have started to appreciate living in another way. All of us have been affected by the pandemic in one way or another, and we can talk about our own experiences (positive and negatives) that pushed us to see what is the most important.

The evangelist Mark tells us in this Sunday's Gospel that the apostles were arguing about who was the most important among them. This is a serious danger in the community, because the desire for pre-eminence always creates tensions and confrontations. That is why Jesus makes it clear to them that in God's Kingdom, those who make themselves the least of all, embody Jesus' own attitude; He "did not come to be served but to serve". This lesson is always good for us, because in our life we are often looking for honours, praise, dominance, to be welcomed, to be appreciated, to be recognized.

But when Jesus comes to Peter's house, he sits quietly and tells his disciples what the Kingdom of Heaven is all about, and to make it more graphic he calls a child, takes the child in his arms and tells the crowd: "Unless you become like this child, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven". Let us try to serve others, and in this way, we will feel happier, and now I remember the verse of Tagore which says: "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I served and saw that service was joy".

We must become great through humble, self-giving service. Greatness, in Jesus' view, is found in our willingness to accept, welcome, and serve those who are marginalized by reason of class, race, colour, religion, wealth, culture or any other reason. We must welcome people the way a child welcomes them before that child is taught discrimination.

We need to practice humility in thoughts, words, and actions. "*Learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.*" "What is the essential thing in the religion and discipline of Jesus Christ?" St. Augustine asks, and then responds, "I shall reply: first humility, second humility, and third humility." We should not seek recognition and recompense for the service we do for Christ and the Church as parents, teachers, pastors, etc. Trusting faith resulting from true humility is essential for all corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

May the Holy spirit guide us to be good witnesses to others through our actions and words,... Many blessings,

In Christ,

*Fr Ciro A. Perez, CSSR*