

Jesus Walks Ahead of Us Eighth Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, May 25, 2016
8:15 AM 1 Pt 1:18-25; **Mk 10:32-45** (St. Bede the Venerable, priest, doctor; St. Gregory VII, pope; St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, virgin) (Jesus was taking them aside from time to time to share with them the mysteries of God, so that they were really experiencing fascination when everyone else was just afraid.)

“They were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.”

In one sense the gospels are inclusive, but in another sense they distinguish. **There are two groups in today’s story: the inner circle of apostles, twelve in number who are amazed**, who are enthralled, who are fascinated; but then there is **another group who are afraid**. These are **two sides of basic religious experience, which is about mystery, which is both frightening and attractive**, which is both awe-inspiring and terrifying—both.

Here in Mark’s Gospel he divides the disciples into two groups: the inner circle, they are experiencing the fascinating side of divine experience, and the others the fearful side. In fact we all experience both as we walk in life: now one, now another. Mark says that they are all going to Jerusalem and this is meant to be the whole Church. Mark’s idea is that **all those who follow Christ experience some kind of passion in life**, some kind of cross, some kind of persecution, some kind of suffering, and certainly some kind of death. But Jesus walks ahead: “and Jesus went ahead of them.” **Jesus has gone ahead of us**. That’s really the reason for the incarnation in the first place, **so Jesus can lead us through passion and death into resurrection and glory**, the fundamental purpose of the creation of the first place.

Now on the way **we are living in two worlds**. We are living in God’s world, but we are still living in the world of human creation, a so-called society or so-called culture. But this is about how **we have to be very careful that we don’t allow the values of our society or our culture to overwhelm the principles of the kingdom that Jesus is himself embodying**.

The perfect example is now James and John who want to be number one and number two in the kingdom. And Jesus says you are really mixing things up—you are mixing things up. You are mixing up a worldly idea of what it means to be great or first or successful or prominent with the kingdom idea. There’s also a first in the kingdom, but **the first in the kingdom is the slave of all**. There is a prominence in the kingdom, but the prominent in the kingdom are the servants.

We have to keep this clear. This gospel is about discrimination. It's all inclusive, yes, but we have to learn how to discern differences. There is a time for fascination, and there is a time for fear. Fear is usually caused by ignorance.

Jesus was leading the apostles with a little bit more help: **“Taking the Twelve aside again.”** This is how he led them. He gave them more than the others had: **“Taking them aside again.” He was taking them aside from time to time to share with them the mysteries of God, so that they were really experiencing fascination when everyone else was just afraid.** They were experiencing God too, but in an ignorant kind of way.

And that continues. **There are people to this day who really do experience God, but in such an ignorant way it leaves them fearful, or even worse, angry, or even worse, violent.** Yeah, they have experienced something beyond themselves, but in a bad way. And **they aren't able to distinguish the light from the dark.** The Scriptures say God is all light, no shadow, no darkness. But the human mind finds it very hard to tell the difference when it is overwhelmed by something greater than themselves. They can identify actually with the darkness. That's of course the work of Satan. And **Satan is very much at work in religious experience.** Satan knows where the power is, the power to change, the power to inspire, the power to lead and transform. And so Satan wants to destroy that at the root: **thus all the confusing messages in our world, as well as the disbelief and the unbelief and the wrong belief.**

Again, if we want to find our way to glory, **we have to follow Jesus who is ahead of us.** We have to be willing to carry the cross. We have to be willing to endure persecution. We have to be willing to go into the darkness with the light so that we can be drawn through the darkness to what God has destined for us, eternal life.