

SERMON
Fifth Sunday of Lent (Mk 10:32-45)
29 March 2026

Today is the last Sunday of Great Lent and in the Gospel Reading, the Lord foretells His terrible Passion. The journey to the Cross and the Resurrection is approaching its end. It is a course that we, according to our own small strength, have tried to follow through the entire ascetic and liturgical practice of our Church throughout this period. Every Sunday our journey has been a milestone, a signpost, just like this Sunday, which is a prelude to our entry into the Holy City of Jerusalem together with Christ next Sunday, which will mark our entry into the Passion week.

James and John, two of the Disciples are obviously sharing the contemporary Jewish perceptions of the earthly Kingdom that the Messiah will establish, and so they are asking for primacy. This will provoke the indignation of the rest, not of course because they had a more correct perception of the Kingdom of the Messiah, but because they were trying to sideline them. Christ comes to clarify things in an unequivocal way; His glorification and authority are signified by the cup and baptism, both indicative of the coming Passion. The Kingdom that the Lord proclaims is not one of power, authority, sovereignty, and primacy; His Kingdom is His salvific weakness, His emptying condescension, His voluntary Passion for the salvation of man. This is the Kingdom that the Lord promises, the content of which the Disciples will understand in its entirety after the descent of the Paraclete on the day of Pentecost.

There is no room for ambiguous interpretations and misunderstandings, the words of the Lord are absolute; His Kingdom and obviously His Church, which is the Kingdom in power, have nothing to do with the worldly power structures that oppress people's lives. The rulers of the nations and their authority have no place in the Kingdom. Whoever wishes to be first in His Kingdom has nothing to do but to place

himself on the last step, the greatest is the smallest of all, the greatest is the most insignificant... This paradoxical reversal of the value scale is the key to understanding the true meaning of the Kingdom.

Certainly, this inverted pyramid, this reversal of the logic of the world, this perception of authority and primacy as a ministry in the service of the other, does not apply only to the Disciples, but to each of us, in all aspects of our lives and in the way we perceive our place in the Church. The Church is not the place of social recognition, of promotion, of the exercise of power; the Church is the place of ministry and therefore of humility. We do not enter the Church to claim honour and authority, but to offer what we can to Christ and our fellow person.

Our saints understood this crucial point that Christ makes in today's Gospel, and their whole life has been a life of ministry and humility. Such an example is also presented today by our holy Church: Saint Mary of Egypt, a woman who is transformed from being the model of the worldly person to becoming a person of the Kingdom, through her overwhelming repentance and humility. The Kingdom is before us, it is the Resurrection of the Lord, and Saint Mary lost everything to gain the Kingdom, even her flesh, her own self. Her example is impossible to imitate, but let us be inspired by her longing for the Kingdom of God, and let us abandon the distorted mentality of the world of arrogance and authority, and let us walk in humility, asking for God's mercy, like the saint celebrated today.