

25 Sunday B

September 23, 2018

St. Patrick

Two weeks ago, we had the “door” vote—parishioners choosing the color of the front doors being refurbished now under the direction of our Parish Pastoral Council. Two-hundred-twenty-one parishioners placed their vote. Forty-four voted for blue—that being 20%. Fifty-one voted for brown—23%, I being one of the “brown” votes. Finally, 126 voted for green—57%, a clear majority over the other two colors.

So, our doors will be green. Now, I’m in negotiations with our Pastoral Council that in the middle of each of the green doors, in gold leaf they inscribe the letters “ND”—clearly referring to Mary, Our Lady, “Notre Dame,” in French. No other links, I assure you.

Tallying the votes. In today’s Gospel the Twelve were arguing among themselves who gets the most votes—who, among them is the greatest. In fact, Jesus points out they were “**arguing**,” who’s the top dog, the one with the most votes.

St. Patrick’s: Can you get the picture, how self-centered and insensitive these Twelve were? Keep in mind, Jesus had just told them about his destiny, his fate: **“The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.”**

Jesus is teaching them about his cross, and they are riveted on which of the Twelve is the greatest, which has the most votes. You see, we’re at the midway point in St. Mark’s Gospel, and last Sunday—*Do you remember?*—Jesus taught them for the first time that he “**must suffer greatly and be rejected.**” For the first time in St. Mark’s Gospel, Jesus tells them he’s going to be killed. Now, this Sunday, as a good teacher would do, a second time Jesus tells them that he will be murdered, killed. And the Twelve—his hand-picked disciples, well, they’re counting votes, arguing which of them is #1.

In fact, in this midway point in St. Mark’s Gospel, *three* times Jesus teaches his Twelve that he would suffer greatly and be killed. All Twelve got an F. They didn’t listen to their Teacher, Jesus. Friends: It’s given to *us* this Sunday, so that we might really *hear* Jesus and stay with him on his way—to Jerusalem, and to the cross. Rather than sizing each other up, as the Twelve did, to see who’s the

greatest, listen to how Jesus turns everything upside down: **“Those who wish to be first shall be last of all and the servant of all.”**

Mohandas Gandhi was the preeminent leader of India in the first half of last century, as the people freed themselves from the shackles of British colonialism. Gandhi formed the largest democracy in the world by non-violence. He lived the non-violence which Jesus taught in his Sermon on the Mount, and which he lived as he was nailed to the cross.

Once Gandhi was traveling by train. He and an associate were running to catch their train. Just as they were pulling themselves up onto the slowly-moving train, one of Gandhi’s sandals fell off. It landed beside the tracks. Gandhi and his associate watched as the train kept going and that sandal lay there. Gandhi then did an odd thing. He removed his other sandal from his foot and tossed it back along the tracks, where it landed near the other sandal. His friend was puzzled and asked why he had done that. “One sandal is no good to me,” Gandhi taught. “But if I cast it down beside the other one, perhaps a poor person will come along, discover them both, and be happy that he now has shoes” (1)

Spontaneously Gandhi looked at the other’s concerns before his own. That’s what Jesus is teaching us as he makes his way to the cross: **“Those who wish to be first shall be last of all and the servant of all.”** *Spontaneously*, to live as Jesus taught, and as he lived.

As he did last Sunday, Jesus teaches the cross, and he turns upside down our way of being and acting. On his way to Jerusalem and the cross, the hand-picked Twelve squabbled about which of them was the most important. The hand-picked Twelve, until the Easter victory, didn’t get what Jesus was teaching them—and us—about being disciples, and the cross in our lives.

St. Patrick’s: On *this* side of the Resurrection, *do we get it?*

(1) See “Lectionary Reflections by Various Authors—James 3:13-18,” for September 23, 2012 @ www.deaconsil.com.

General Intercessions

September 23, 2018

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Kindle your Holy Spirit within us, your Church, so that we might become servants of all, and follow Jesus more closely in his journey to the cross; we pray to you, O Lord—

Give healing and hope within our Church universal, and within our own Diocese of Memphis; we pray to you, O Lord—

Lead St. Patrick parishioners as we reflect in small groups Pope Francis' teaching on the Beatitudes; we pray to you, O Lord—

Bring about justice and healing to victims of sexual, physical or verbal abuse; we pray to you, O Lord—

Bring comfort and relief to all victims of Hurricane Florence, and give safety and to all providing relief support; we pray to you, O Lord—

Protect the unborn, the unwanted, and immigrants and refugees seeking a new home; we pray to you, O Lord—

