



Lenten Reflection for Wednesday, March 16th

Kristin Popham

You can listen to the reading and reflection by clicking [here](#).

Matthew 20:17 - 28

While Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised."

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Rereading this passage upon assignment, the first thing that stood out to me was the audaciousness of James and John's mother- she's basically the biblical version of a stage mom. It's almost funny, one would think that if both of your sons were disciples you would have a basic understanding of what Jesus's whole deal was. But, apparently not and her request gives Jesus a great opportunity to reiterate his message very clearly: That he was sent by God not to be served, but to serve. That his followers will not obtain greatness by authority over others, but through service.

I think a lot about service, particularly as an act of devotion. I grew up Roman Catholic, and acts of religious devotion that I witnessed were often of abstinence, deprivation or mortification. Those things frightened

me as a child, and as I grew seemed impossible and somehow wrong. But acts of service? Working in our church's soup kitchen, weeding the community garden, even just helping our senior parishioners grocery shop- those things felt right. Like I was following the path that Jesus laid out. These were my acts of devotion, in the same way that my Grandfather would wear a cilice or my Mom would say her rosary.

As an adult, I have to put a great deal of effort into making space in my life for service. I have two small children, and they take up much of my time and energy. I don't do as much as I used to, and I feel terribly about that. There is always more to be done, that is true- but I have decided to give myself a little grace in this current season of my life. My service may not be as formal, or extensive as it was right now, but these little acts of devotion are still important. Dropping off food in our community pantry, donating funds, even just bringing in my elderly neighbor's trash cans for them- this is how I can serve right now.



Kristin Popham lives in Kensington with her husband Mark and two small daughters. She has been attending Holy Apostles since 2019.