

Tenth Sunday of the Holy Cross – Greatness is Service

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian
St. Sarkis Armenian Church. Carrollton, TX
November 13, 2016
Gospel Reading: Luke 9:44-50*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It is natural that each of us wants to feel wanted and needed, especially since we think we are the best and greatest in certain categories. The same was true for the disciples in today's Gospel reading. The disciples were arguing who among them was the greatest, because they wanted to know who was going to inherit Christ's kingdom (thinking it would be an earthly kingdom). Yet Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a child and placed the child next to Him and exclaimed that this child held the greatest place of honor, for "whoever receives this little child in His name, receives Him; and whoever receives Him, receives the One who sent Him" (Luke 9:48).

Unlike the disciples, who were like Jesus's lieutenants, this child held no position or place of honor, but Jesus was explaining that if we are prepared to live serving, helping and loving people who, in the world's eyes do not matter, then we are serving Christ and God. That is to say, if we are prepared to serve and do these apparently unimportant things and never try to be what the world calls great, it is then that we will be great in the eyes of God.

There are many reasons why people serve, but the three main reasons are the following:

1. People serve for prestige and power. People want others to listen to them and work for them, but in reality, when we serve, we must not look at it as people working for us or we are working for other, but that we all are working for God.
2. People serve for position. When we are given a task or position, we must not look at it as an honor, but a responsibility. Too often, people think of only themselves and forget about those whom they are serving.
3. People serve for prominence and praise. Many are willing to serve and show generosity, only if they are thanked and praised for what they have done. If we give in order to gain, then we are undoing the good which we have done.

In a nutshell, to be the greatest means to serve others, just as the little child who serves and helps without expecting prestige, power, position, prominence or praise is the greatest, so too

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must we serve. And we must serve with love. Love transforms service into a virtuous deed. When a loved one is ill, we are willing to do the dirtiest and most menial and humbling acts and even to delight in them, because we love that person. This is what true service is and this is how we become the greatest.

This past week has been an interesting week for our country and the world. There are many who are arguing and fighting over who is the greatest and best for the office of President of the United States. Whether we like it or not, Donald Trump will be our next president. Many are afraid and worried, but we should take comfort in Christ's final words in today's Gospel reading, "for whoever is not against you, is for you" (Luke 9:50).

Many will say Donald Trump is not for us and he will not be good for our country, the world or the presidency. If that is the case, then we must pray that God softens and changes his heart – and we must not think that even Donald Trump's heart is outside the influence of God's grace. For just as God changed the hearts of Matthew the tax collector, Paul the persecutor of the Christians and King Trdat the pagan king who murder nuns, He surely can change the heart of anyone. Through His power and grace, Matthew became an evangelist to the Jews; Paul became an evangelist to the Gentiles and King Trdat became one of the greatest kings in all of Christendom.

Above all this, let us continue to pray that God grant our president elect wisdom, guidance and strength to fulfill what is best for our country, the world and God's will.

Amen.