

Reflection by Father Xavier
29'th Sunday - B

As we draw near to the end of the present Liturgical Year, the readings of today take on a new urgency and significance. Today's first reading from the Book of Isaiah the Prophet begins with the startling sentence: "The Lord was pleased to crush him with suffering." Isaiah is speaking about the Suffering Servant of God, who gives his life to save his people. And then in today's Gospel we see Jesus and his disciples on the last leg of their long journey from the north of Palestine to the gates of the city of Jerusalem. It is there that Jesus is destined to suffer and to die.

And now you can begin to understand the mood that Jesus must have been in at this time. He was trying to tell the disciples that their journey to Jerusalem was not going to be a triumphal victory march over the Romans, but rather the death of their dreams, for the suffering servant of God the Father will suffer and die for our sins. Jesus was walking on ahead, because they were full of fear and confusion, reluctant to follow, struggling along like defeated men, who barely heard his final promise: "After three days I will rise again."

And now Mark tells us, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus. The brothers were special favorites of his. But if he was looking for sympathy or some compassion from them in this dark hour, he was to be disappointed. "Master," they said to him, "We want you to do us a favour." And Jesus said to them: "What is it you want me to do for you?" They said: "Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at you left when you come into your glory."

Such arrogance! Such childishness! Jesus could hardly believe it: "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I must drink of be baptized with the baptism which I must be baptized?" He was referring to his coming Passion and his death. How disappointed in them he must have been. For they, like all the others were thinking not of what they could do for their Lord, but what they could get out of it for themselves. They, too, were with thoughts of glory and power, prestige, honor, and praise. But he, their Lord and Master was speaking of drinking the cup of bitterness, given to the prophets of old when their

destiny is revealed to them by God, a destiny involving suffering and pain, pain and suffering until their final redemption in the arms of God himself.

Ask yourselves, why would Jesus say these things and follow in such a path? Simply because it's the way of his Father. There is an old saying "Like Father, like Son." And in this case it is true. One day Jesus said to one of his disciples who asked him to show us the Father, and he answered "He who sees me sees the Father."

We, then, must learn from the Father through his son and understand his ways, for God is a giver, he is a lover and he is the one who cares for us. "Where is God?" people ask. "God is where you and I allow him to be" is the answer. "God is love" we say it all the time. And wherever there is love, you will find him. You will discover him among those who need him, who want him and who welcome him into their hearts.