

## **Missionary Commentary**

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
October 20, 2024

## **Sunday Readings**

Isaiah 53:10-11  
Psalm 33:4-15,18-19,20,22  
Hebrews 4:14-16  
Mark 10:35-45 or 10:42-45  
[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

## **Too Many Cooks, Too Few Servers**

Missionaries who cross over the barriers of language and culture to live among people in foreign lands will often discover how the poor and vulnerable of every nation are made to suffer by heartless bureaucracies and bullies.

They also discover the contrast that the life of Christian communities abroad offer to these realities, in their own practice of servant leadership that Jesus teaches us about today.

In the soup kitchens that sprang up in many neighborhoods in Chile, during the dictatorship, tensions often arose when the flour or sugar supply occasionally came up short, or the funds gathered for further purchases of natural gas or food disappeared. The heated arguments over accountability and excuses often ended in division and dissolution of the soup kitchen committee, and an abrupt end of a needed service to the poorest of the area, in the most difficult of times, marked by oppression and unemployment.

But because of Jesus' teachings on a new way of life, admission of the truth and the asking of forgiveness among the members of those soup kitchen committees that were attached to chapel or parish communities frequently prevented the breakup of the group, and they tended to last a longer time than the soup kitchens set up by political parties.

Jesus could see the tensions in his own group of followers leading towards division and breakup, and anticipates them by teaching his disciples about a different kind of authority in social groups—not the authority of those who imposed their will, like dictators, seeking to control others and win acclaim, but the authority that takes Jesus for its model: the one whose greatness is revealed by his service to all, offering up even his own life for his friends.

May we build the unity and strength of the organizations we belong to with the value of servant leadership, and thus give witness to the coming of God's Kingdom in our lives, and in our world.

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## **Notes on the Sunday Readings**

### **First Reading**

Isaiah 53:10-11 – This passage is from one of the four “suffering servant” songs composed soon after the return of Judah’s people from Babylonian exile to the Promised Land began. These songs portray a figure of supreme holiness, with a mission from God to fulfill, in the face of hostility and violence. Note how Jesus will use a verse from this same text at the end of today’s Gospel reading, identifying himself as the long-awaited servant.

### **Responsorial Psalm**

Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22 – This psalm, categorized as a hymn of praise, proclaims that the God who “has his eye on” everyone, as their supreme judge, also “eyes” his faithful with compassion.

### **Second Reading**

Hebrews 4:14-16 – To fortify Christian beliefs in the face of strong Jewish influences, the inspired, anonymous author of this letter, writing in the first century of the Christian Era, describes the perfect priesthood of Jesus Christ, whose sympathetic mediation implies solidarity with those he serves, forming a bond that is stronger than that of an earthly high priest in a temple, and providing greater access to God.

### **Gospel**

Mark 10:35-45 or 10:42-45 – According to Jesus, true greatness involves the service of others, as found in the image of the Suffering Servant in the book of Isaiah, and does not concern itself about preeminence in the coming Kingdom of God.

*Notes and commentary by Fr. Bob Mosher,  
a member of the [Missionary Society of Saint Columban](#).*

Please pray for the missions.

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