

Holy Monday

Reading Matthew 20:17-28

Meditation

He was the head of a major division of a large company, and his employees hated him. He drove them to work harder and harder, while he spent afternoons on the golf course. He took his employees' ideas and presented them to his superiors as his own, without giving the employees credit.

He did not care about the working conditions, which were steadily deteriorating, even though his own office was refurbished several times. How many of us have had a boss like this? Or even just a boss who is a difficult person, difficult to communicate with, unappreciative, self-absorbed?

Jesus presents us with a very different picture of how to be a "boss" or master. Two disciples, the brothers James and John (through their mother), asked for positions of honor next to Jesus, their master, much as workers jockey for positions in today's corporate world. When the other disciples heard this, they were angry, probably because each of them also wanted the same high position.

But Jesus explained to them that, in his kingdom, in order to be a leader you must be a *servant* of those whom you lead. You must respect them and care for them. You must see to their needs, as a servant would. Jesus reminded the disciples that even he, the Messiah, did not come to be served by others, but came instead to serve others—to suffer and even give his life for his followers.

What kind of leader are we? If we have employees at work, do we treat them with understanding and respect? Do we respect our own children in our home? At church, do we give others jobs to do, or do them ourselves when they need to be done? These are the marks of Christian leadership.

Prayer

*Jesus, you showed us what it means to lead.
You taught us that to lead, you must first serve.
And you gave us the greatest example of service
through your suffering and death for us.
Give us the knowledge and the wisdom, Lord,
To know how to lead by serving others.*

For reflection

How do I treat those whom I lead or am in charge of?

How can Jesus be an example for me in leading others?

Did you know . . .

One of the themes of Holy Monday is the creation of the world and the barrenness of humankind as symbolized by the sterile fig tree (Matthew 21:18-22). As always, the hymns support the message of the Scripture readings: "O Christ, you who renews our nature, who saw the barren fig tree as a symbol of the old, renew us from our sins."