

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 21, 2018

Isn't it amazing that no one won either the Powerball or the mega millions lottery this week? With all of the millions of people entering their numbers, not one person hit the one billion dollar jackpot. Really, what everyone is trying to do is exactly what James and John are trying to do in the gospel today. They want Jesus to give them the jackpot. They want all of the benefits and perks and privilege over and above everybody else. Well, I did not buy a lottery ticket because a billion dollars would definitely disturb my peace of mind.

Jesus tells James and John the naked truth. You don't know what you're asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? Have you any idea what you are asking?

What we are talking about here is all about love. A life fully lived is not an indulgent life. The good life is not a life on easy street. A life that is vibrant and full of joy is a life that is full of love. It's all about love. And with love there is sacrifice. It cannot be any other way. When you love someone, you need to be ready to give up anything and everything for him or her.

Often before a wedding I have the groom with me in the sacristy along with some of his buddies who are members of the wedding party. Almost always they are giving the groom a hard time and warning him that he should be ready to check his life in at the door. This is the end of life as he knows it. Really, there is a lot of truth in that. With love, life is changed forever.

The word sacrifice has its root in the word sacred. Sacrifice is a foreign language. It is the language of God. Especially what you might call substitutionary sacrifice. When you give up your time and attention and energy and money all for the good of the one you love, that is true love. It is sacrificial love. It is sacred love. If you defer to him or her, to the one you love and instead of doing whatever you want, you do whatever it takes to make happen that which is desired by your spouse. That is sacrificial love.

In the gospel Jesus points out to the apostles that they do not know what they are asking. Be happy that you did not win that billion-dollar jackpot. Because whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Frankly, we are all winners of far more than \$1 billion. The air you breathe and the beat of your heart, how much is that worth? What is the worth of your sacred soul? We could go on with 1000 more priceless gifts from God. This Eucharist is a celebration of you as the winner of the greatest jackpot ever. You are the recipient of the infinite grace of God.