

## **REFLECTION FOR WEDNESDAY OF SECOND WEEK OF LENT**

**Jer 18:18-20 Matt 20:17-28**

Mothers always want the best for their children. In this morning's gospel reading, the mother of James and John asks Jesus for the best places in his kingdom for her two sons.

The mother of James and John was called Salome. She was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. That means that James and John were full cousins of Jesus; and it may well have been that they felt that this close relationship entitled them to a special place in his kingdom. That is why the mother of James and John (Salome) asked Jesus if her sons could have the top two positions in his kingdom.

Obviously, she thought that Jesus' kingdom would be modelled on worldly kingdoms. Those in high places would be modelled on worldly kingdoms. Those in high places would enjoy honour, glory, and power, and would lord it over their subjects.

But Jesus told her that it wouldn't be like that at all. In the kingdom of God, the greatest are those who serve. He set the example himself. As Lord and Master he could have lorded it over the apostles. But he didn't. He made himself their servant. Instead of going on a power-trip, he went the way of self-emptying love.

Self-sacrifice ought to be part of an authentic Christian life. But it is an essential element of Christian leadership. Loving service should be the chief characteristic of the Christian leader. Love is made visible in service. And it is by serving that we grow in love.

The world will respect, and admire, and sometimes fear, the person of power; but it will love the person of love.

Greatness does not consist in commanding others to do things for you; it consists in doing things for others. And the greater the service, the greater the honour.

Fr. Patrick.