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September 23, 2018

To some extent, I'd guess most people are aware of the fact that those expecting a Messiah in Christ's time were expecting someone not quite like Jesus. They expected an Earthly Kingdom. This is why it is prophesied that some people would decide to test if he was the real Messiah by turning him over to torturers.

“Let us see whether his words be true;
let us find out what will happen to him.
For if the just one be the son of God, God will defend him
and deliver him from the hand of his foes.”

Some think this is what Judas was doing: setting him up for the big unveiling. Christ came proclaiming the Kingdom, certainly. From the very beginning he told them, “Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand.” However, the Kingdom did not look like what they expected. It seemed spiritual, it did not center around the temple, it did no longer followed all the laws about cleanliness or washing. It was going to be a persecuted group. Its leader was going to be persecuted.

“The Son of Man is to be handed over to men
and they will kill him,
and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.”

And since no one had ever risen before, no one knew what rising meant. It was clear, however, that Christ was preaching something unexpected. The disciples thought that he would be King, and a King has his court around him. “Come, follow me” implies there is something in it for you. You will be a duke or governor of some province something in the Kingdom. The disciples are so concerned about this. Remember when Peter asks, “We have given up everything and followed you. What will there be for us?” Presumably being a “fisher of men” means being a great leader of some sort, maybe Peter will have his own entourage.

This is what they are arguing about in today's Gospel. Which of them was the greatest? Who is going to be in charge of what aspect of the Kingdom? So Christ has to correct them, again:

“If anyone wishes to be first,
he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.”
Taking a child, he placed it in their midst,
and putting his arms around it, he said to them,
“Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me;
and whoever receives me,
receives not me but the One who sent me.”

Instead of being a governor, they are...a divinely appointed baby-sitter?

Speaking about this passage, Pope Benedict said regarding its relevance today,

What does all this tell us? it reminds us that, the logic of God is always “different” from ours, just as God himself revealed through the mouth of Isaiah: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, / neither are your ways my ways” (Is 55:8). For this reason following the Lord always demands of human beings — of all of us — a profound conversion, a change in our manner of thinking and living, it demands that the heart be opened to listening, to let ourselves be illuminated and transformed from within.

Our values need to become God’s values. Our priorities need to become God’s priorities. St. Teresa of Calcutta was once told by someone, “I wouldn’t do what you do for a million dollars.” She replied, “Neither would I.” Money is not the highest good for someone who sees the dignity of every human person.

So I propose that the readings challenge us today to ask ourselves these three things:
What are my expectations of God?
How has Christ and the cross challenged or changed that expectation?
And in light of that, where is Christ asking me to convert in my manner of thinking and living?