

MAY 27, 2026 FATHER MATTHEW KUCHARSKI

Reflecting on our scriptures today, I was thinking about the part where it says, “When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John.” I wondered, were they angry with James and John because they had asked a question that they shouldn’t have? Or were they angry because the other ten hadn’t thought to ask such a question first, and now they thought they had missed out?

Maybe they were upset with James and John, who had tried to gain some advantage over them. This reminds me of growing up. Perhaps you have had an experience that you can relate to this? Maybe. Can you recall when you were a child and your mom or dad announced that they were taking the family for ice cream? And then one of your siblings shouts out, “Shotgun!” which means they get to sit in the front passenger seat. And then how you, and perhaps the other siblings, got upset with that one? Not so much because they were going to get that special seat, but because they shouted it first.

Ironically, it didn’t matter who sat where because everyone was going to get to the ice cream parlor anyhow. However, we put a lot of emphasis on that special seat, and we fail to see the importance of the destination and of the journey there.

Likewise with Jesus, he emphasizes that where we sit is not important. It is being with him in glory that matters. And further, it is the way to that place that is even more key. We don’t get there by lording it over others or believing that we are superior to them. Jesus says, “Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant.” Serving one another is the path we are called to follow.

As Jesus reminds us, “The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.” Jesus’ life shows us a model of service and of self-giving. We have just concluded the season of Easter with the celebration of

Pentecost. During the Triduum, as we may recall, we saw Jesus serve by washing the feet of his disciples and ultimately sacrificing himself by dying on the cross for us.

Jesus doesn't just speak the truth, he lives it and expects us to do the same. Those who follow the way of Jesus and seek to imitate the Master's example of servant leadership must be willing even to suffer for others. Service always involves sacrifice because we cannot help another without giving something of ourselves. The criterion of greatness among the disciples is self-sacrifice, humility, and unconditional love.

So perhaps that leaves us with the question: how are you and I living a life of service? We can turn to some of the great saints in our history, like Saint Teresa of Calcutta, for inspiration. But I'm guessing most of us are not called to her level of service. Perhaps we can turn instead to another Teresa, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and her "little way."

The little way is about being small and doing the smallest actions with great love. Instead of focusing on large actions, we bring God into the smallest ones. Saint Thérèse even wrote about how much care she put into folding napkins at the dinner table, completing the task with as much love and attention as if Jesus himself were coming to dine with her.

Each day, opportunities arise for us to serve—our spouse, our children, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our neighbors, our coworkers, or even the stranger on the street. An act of service could be letting the person with only a few grocery items go ahead of us when our cart is full. It could be offering an understanding smile to a waitress overwhelmed with the lunch crowd, she might even appreciate an extra tip.

Even small moments count. I know I might be tempted to quickly push the “door close” button when I enter an elevator. But perhaps waiting an extra second to see if someone is coming, and holding the door open can be an act of service. We can serve by sincerely listening to our spouse, our children, or our grandchildren, really paying attention and not just offering token responses.

Maybe we can serve by sharing freshly baked muffins with a neighbor. And sometimes, we can serve without even leaving our home by offering a prayer for someone who is struggling.

So let us not worry about shouting “shotgun,” but instead watch for ways to serve. As Saint Peter reminds us, love one another from a pure heart, that is, with a servant heart like Jesus. Greatness consists not in what we have, nor in what we can get from others, but in how we serve others.