

Session Seven Handout: Christ's Way of Leadership is Servanthood

Opening Prayer

Jesus, you taught us to be servants to one another, just as you served those around you. Give us the humility to serve as you served and remind us that power does not come from authority, but from a place of service and love toward You and one another. Amen.

Not to be Served but to Serve

Matthew 20:20-28

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. ²¹ And he said to her, ‘What do you want?’ She said to him, ‘Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.’ ²² But Jesus answered, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?’ They said to him, ‘We are able.’ ²³ He said to them, ‘You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.’

²⁴ When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. ²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.²⁶ It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant,²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave;²⁸ just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’

Reflection:

- What stood out for you in this reading?
- What does it mean to serve?
- What does it mean to be a servant?
- How do we give our lives to service?

Christ's Way of Leadership is Servanthood

WE BELIEVE that Christ's way of leadership is servanthood, not domination. Jesus said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles (the world) lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:25-26). We believe our elected officials are called to public service, not public tyranny, so we must protect the limits, checks, and balances of democracy and encourage humility and civility on the part of elected officials. We support democracy, not because we believe in human perfection, but because we do not. The authority of government is instituted by God to order an unredeemed society for the sake of justice and peace, but ultimate authority belongs only to God.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT any moves toward autocratic political leadership and authoritarian rule. We believe authoritarian political leadership is a theological danger that threatens democracy and the common good—and we will resist it. Disrespect for the rule of law, not recognizing the equal importance of our three branches of government, and replacing civility with dehumanizing hostility toward opponents are of great concern to us. Neglecting the ethic of public service and accountability, in favor of personal recognition and gain often characterized by offensive arrogance, are not just political issues for us. They raise deeper concerns about political idolatry, accompanied by false and unconstitutional notions of authority.

Closing Prayer

Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve;
To give, and not to count the cost;
To fight, and not to heed the wounds;

To toil, and not to seek for rest;
To labor, and not to ask for reward,
Save that of knowing that we do thy will;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

- *St. Ignatius of Loyola*