

**Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Community Days 2009**



Homily by Sister Kathy McCluskey, CSJ, October 27, 2009

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 53:10-11; Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22; Heb 4:14-16; Mk 10:35-45

James and John – oh my!

We can all see what’s coming.

Whatever made them think they could say to Jesus, “We want you to do for us whatever we ask”?

Didn’t they feel a little presumptuous? We can also see the disciples’ reaction – they all knew better, right?

So we learn a lesson from James and John right? I/you would never do that, right? When’s the last time you did that? Let’s see – I think it was this morning I did it.

What a path the brothers walked down with their request, especially because Jesus’ response evokes a powerful commitment from them, and then he still doesn’t give them what they want. He promises them suffering instead.

The evangelist follows this story with cautions about the dangers of using positions of authority to ‘lord it over others.’ And, rightly so, but I wonder what else Jesus might have heard in the demand of the disciples – so fouled up in questions of power. “We want to be right next to you. We feel so close to you that we feel free to ask boldly for what we want.” Imagine the affection with which Jesus might have attended to them as he invited them further into the mystery.

Do you want to be with me? Get ready to be one with the suffering servant. What did these disciples know of what was to come? How completely unknowing they were about the depth of suffering and the miracle of rising that would follow.

But we know.

We know the secret grace in darkness embraced.

Our hearts and minds are embedded in the story of Jesus.

Our memories are full of hope, even memories of dark places, of uncertainty, of threat.

For us, as Bruggemann reminds us “hope is not a late, tacked-on hypothesis to serve a crisis but rather the primal dimension of every memory of this community. The memory of this community begins in God’s promissory address to the darkness of chaos,” unfolds in Jesus, and extends to disciples in every age.*

Our memories hold stories of God’s ways, of the action of grace in our personal and communal lives, in our world and in unfolding creation. Our memories are a promise and source of hope.

We have been seized by Hope, still another name of God, which invites us to yield unconditionally to God’s future. Let us then be bearers of the memories, the promise, and the hope.

* From *The Prophetic Imagination* by Walter Brueggemann. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978. p. 66.