

31st Sunday of Ordinary Time

Malachi 1:14b--2:2b,8-10
 Ps 131:1-3
 1 Thessalonians 2:7,9,13
 Matthew 23:1-12

Monday November 6

Romans 11:29-36
 Ps 69:30-34, 36
 Luke 14:12-14

Tuesday November 7

Romans 12:5-16ab
 Ps 131:1-3
 Luke 14:15-24

Wednesday November 8

Romans 13:8-10
 Ps 112:1b-2,4-5,9
 Luke 14:25-33

Thursday November 9

Feast of Lateran Basilica
 Ezekiel 47:1-2,8-9,12
 Ps 46:2-3,5-6,8-9
 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11,16-17
 John 2:13-22

Friday November 10

St. Leo the Great
 Romans 15:14-21
 Ps 98:1-4
 Luke 16:1-8

Saturday November 11

St. Martin of Tours
 Romans 16:3-9,16,22-27
 Ps 145:2-5,10-11
 Luke 16:9-15

Today's Gospel reading contains a verse that, when taken literally, has been used by some Protestants to condemn Catholicism because we call our priests "Father." By that logic, when Jesus said, "Call no one on earth your father," he meant our dads, too, right? Did he never call St. Joseph by the title father? Perhaps when Jesus as a lad had a question about carpentry he said, "Hey dude who's married to Mom!" I don't think so.



To understand what Jesus means in this scripture, we need to read the whole passage: This singled-out verse is actually part of a teaching about equality. He is telling us that we must not consider anyone to be superior to ourselves – no one but God is superior to us.

Jesus says here: "The greatest among you must be your servant." At other times in other scriptures, Jesus says

that if we want to be greatest, we have to be the servant of all, because we must not think of ourselves as superior to others. But in today's lesson he's telling us not to think of ourselves as inferior, either. He's trying to cure our low self-esteem.

Do you know, for example, that as a child of God you are not inferior to the pope? This is why he's called the

servant of the servants of God. As Christ's representative in Church leadership, he serves us in everything he does, whether it's presiding at Mass or making decisions.

No matter what someone's credentials are, no matter how much authority God has given to our priests and other leaders, and no matter how famous or well-liked anyone is, we

are all equally loved by God. We're all equally important to God.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Do you feel served by those who have higher status? Why or why not?
2. When you don't, how much of this is your own attitude of assuming that you're inferior? What will you do to shift your thinking and accept your own value according to God's perspective?
3. When someone's job or talents or position in the family or church seems greater than yours, how do you overcome your feelings of inferiority?
4. How does Jesus convey to you that you are inferior to no one?
5. Describe a time when you felt inferior but then became aware of your equal value. (This story will help others who are struggling to overcome their own feelings of inferiority.)