

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

*It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be the first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

*Matthew 20:26–28*



One of the most important, recurring themes in the Gospels is the large gap between Jesus' descriptions of God's kingdom and how his followers imagine it. In today's passage, the mother of the sons of Zebedee makes the same mistake generations of Christians have made by equating Jesus' coming kingdom with worldly wealth and power.

She wants in—or, more specifically, she wants her sons to benefit from high positions in Jesus' coming reign. Jesus' response is one of surprise and bafflement. He has just finished describing the way of the cross that awaits him. How could anyone mistake the shameful crucifixion he must endure with powerful thrones, golden crowns and worldly power?

Over the past year, I've visited many museums that focus on medieval religious art. Very often, Jesus is portrayed as a royal king, replete with golden crown, scepter and orb. While I understand that this imagery is intended to convey the glory and power of the resurrected Christ, ruling and judging from his universal throne, I can't help but wonder whether such imagery misses the point. For generations, Christians have kept trying to put a golden crown on one who wore a crown of thorns.

### **Today's readings**

Psalm 31:9–16 | Jeremiah 18:1–11, 18–20

Matthew 20:17–28

*How do we sometimes confuse the true essence of faith and discipleship with worldly success and recognition? What steps can we take to better align our understanding with the teachings of Jesus and his message of selflessness and humility?*