

GOSPEL PEARLS

The fascination of human power

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As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day." Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached him with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something. He said to her, "What do you wish?" She answered him, "Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus said in reply, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?" They said to him, "We can." He replied, "My cup you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left, this is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20: 17-28)

Jesus taught his disciples the true meaning of power but according to divine will. For God, power must be at the service of the weakest. Thus, Christians must follow Jesus's example, not Caesar or Herod's. Jesus is apparently subject to powerful humans, like Herod or Pilate, yet he is actually free because he does not have an ego to serve, neither his own nor that of others. Those who do so, on the contrary, are enslaved, as they end

up sacrificing everything to keep their power. All of us exercise power in some shape or form, yet may we humbly ask our Lord to never allow us to succumb to temptation in order to maintain our power at all costs.