

Himself even unto death. He loves all mankind; His life is lived totally for others. That is what makes greatness in the Church.

The great men and women in the Church are those who are most like Christ. They are the ones who serve and do not expect to be served. They are the ones who humble themselves through repentance like the publican and the prodigal son, they are the ones who do not judge others but who know that they are the chief of sinners. They are the ones who love all people unconditionally and who pray not just for their own family and friends but for the whole world. The great ones in the Church are those who never seek or want praise. They do not seek or even want to be thanked. They often do their good deeds secretly. They don't tell the church how they want to serve, they simply ask "what needs to be done?" and then if possible they do it.

The great ones among us do not call attention to themselves; they are usually the silent ones. They do not claim any rights but are thankful for the privilege of serving others. They make no demands, do not express their thoughts and opinions without being asked and are not easily recognized, for they prefer not to be recognized, but God sees them and their faithfulness and that is the only thing that is important to them.

#### *Conclusion*

No one would have ever known about the great Mary of Egypt if it had not been for the elder Zosimus who found her in the desert by chance. She sought no recognition from men, she only wanted to be known by God as the humble Mary. We consider her a great saint of the Church today because of her sincere repentance and humble service to God.

Jesus was called the humble servant by St. Paul and the suffering servant by Isaiah. He was not considered great by the world's standard of greatness, but He is the greatest man who has ever lived and who lives today and forever.

Hear His words:

“ . . . whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” **Amen!**

## Great Men and Women

**“The great ones among us do not call attention to themselves; they are usually the silent ones. They do not claim any rights but are thankful for the privilege of serving others. They make no demands, do not express their thoughts and opinions without being asked and are not easily recognized, for they prefer not to be recognized, but God sees them and their faithfulness and that is the only thing that is important to them.”**

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## † Gospel: Mark 10:32–45

*At that time, Jesus took His twelve Disciples, and began to tell them what was to happen to Him, saying, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles. And they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit upon Him, and kill Him; and after three days He will rise.” And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Him, and said to Him, “Teacher, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire” And Jesus said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” And they said to Him, “Grant us to sit, one at Thy right hand and one at Thy left, in Thy glory.” But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” And they said to Him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized. But to sit at My right hand or at My left is not Mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to Him and said to them, “You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”*

### Introduction

Today we remember Mary of Egypt—not because she was beautiful, not because she was famous, not because she was powerful, not because she was brilliant, not because she commanded conquering armies, but rather because of her sincere and continuous repentance, her voluntary poverty and humility. Mary of Egypt is a great woman in the Kingdom of God. We should also note that all the great men and women of the church—the Saints—are honored and venerated because of their repentance, their humility and their sacrificial love and faith.

In our text Jesus speaking to His disciples and especially to James and John taught them and through them teaches us what it means to be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. The definition of greatness in the Church is very different from its definition in the world.

### Greatness in the World

If we look around at the great men and women in our world we see people like movie stars, athletes, business leaders, the very rich, or the

very smart. These are the greats among us. All of these have one thing in common—they know they are great and want others to know it as well—they expect to be served and praised in public. Because they know they are considered great in our world they often feel that they are above the law and common morality. The great in our world are in a privileged class and they demand those privileges. They are proud of the fact that they are not like you and me, they are the elite in our world. Because they have achieved greatness, they feel entitled to be served by others and to control others—after all, they are the great ones.

Of course the root problem here is pride. And pride contaminates us all. Pride blinded the eyes and covered the ears of James and John in our text. Jesus had just told them about His coming passion, death, and resurrection and all they could think about was themselves, they weren't concern for Jesus they were concerned for their own status—their own importance in the Kingdom.

Pride dulls our discernment of right and wrong, of truth and deception. Pride hears the words of a flatterer and accepts them as true. Pride believes that anything it desires or wants to do is right and does not feel bound to any absolute or universal morality.

Most of all pride expects to be served and rejects service to others unless there is a payback. Pride expects others to sacrifice for it, but never sacrifices for others. Pride is the essence of Satan and the exact opposite of Jesus Christ. Greatness in the world is nourished by pride and eventually consumes itself in an orgy of self deception and self adulation.

### Greatness in the Church

But as Jesus said in our text “it shall not be so among you.” Greatness in the Church of Jesus Christ is completely different from that in the world. Jesus taught His disciples that

“. . . whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

Greatness in the Church is defined as being the servant of all. Greatness in the Church is being like Christ. As we have heard two Sundays ago it is denying our self, taking up our cross, and following our Lord. As Christians we believe that the greatest man in the world is Jesus Christ and He is the servant of all, He sacrificed His life for all, He humbled