

When I read stories such as we hear in today's Gospel, I feel close to the followers of Jesus who, despite all his teaching, still get it wrong! Today we hear that they didn't understand when he said that the Son of Man would be put to death, but would rise again after three days. They can be forgiven for this, but remained silent when Jesus asked what they had been arguing about on the road. They must have been embarrassed as it became obvious that Jesus knew the argument had been about who was the greatest.

Jesus gave them another example of the Servant King, as he did last Sunday and said:

"If anyone wants to be first, they must become last of all and servant of all."

Then he reinforced his message by putting his arms around a little child and telling them:

"Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."



So what does a child represent? What message is Jesus trying to give us?

A child represents innocence, simplicity and openness. Children are eager to learn, trusting and are filled with awe and wonder.

Jesus is telling us that we must live our lives with God's values and, like him, be the servant of others. In the second reading, St James tells the followers of Jesus to stop fighting with one another, to stop wanting what another person has and to live in peace with our sisters and brothers.

Last week, I had the joy of attending an assembly at St Joseph's RC Primary School, George Row. During this time of worship, the children appointed to the Catholic Life Committee were introduced to the school community and given their badges of office. When the name of one of the students was read out, the Assistant Head said that this boy was a wonderful example to the rest of the school.

Earlier in the morning, as they waited in pouring rain to come into school, this child had been observed holding his umbrella over a reception pupil who did not have an umbrella and would have ended up very, very wet. I like to think that this is the kind of child Jesus would have shown to his disciples as a model of serving one another.



*From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled,
not to be served but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.*

This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.

*So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone him,
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.*

Graham Kendrick

We pray for all children in our world that their innocence, simplicity and openness may not be compromised by adults in their lives.

We pray for children who have been victims of war or violence, especially the children of Afghanistan.

We pray for the grace to be servants for others, following in Jesus' way.

