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-- MLK is remembered for several of his speeches, including the *I Have a Dream* speech at the Lincoln Memorial and the address on the night before his assassination where he said *I've been to the mountaintop, and I've seen the Promised Land*.

-- But one of his best known sermons is on today's gospel. He entitled it *The Drum Major Instinct*. He spoke about the human desire to be in the spotlight, the temptation that James, John and (really) the other apostles fell to.

-- We all want to feel important, like we've made a difference. In some ways, that is good. We want to make a positive contribution to the world around us. We want to do something good for the people around us.

-- But we can easily think that what we do entitles us to some higher place on the totem pole. Even our religious work earns us our own seat at the main table in the heavenly banquet. We forget that our aim is to serve people, not our own needs.

-- James and John wanted that. They felt they had earned a special place at that table. Jesus, who'd just told them for the third time how he would suffer and die, could have been exasperated at them.

-- But he wasn't. He simply asked *Can you drink the cup that I drink...?* In effect, he was asking them if they'd be willing to follow him, even to death. Confidently...almost in a cocky way, they said Yes.

-- He granted the first part of their wish. They would die for him; they would be among the first martyrs of the Church.

-- A great preacher who served as a chaplain at Duke University recalled attending the baptism of a Chinese student there. It was a great celebration, and he wanted to take pictures. But the student was shy and embarrassed.

-- He knew he couldn't share the pictures with loved ones. He knew his father would probably disinherit him for being baptized. He knew he

would likely lose his scholarship. There was a huge cost for him to follow Jesus.

-- A number of men who have gone into the seminary recently have spoken about family members who have found it hard to accept their decision. For them, there is a cost to following Jesus.

-- As one fellow priest who attended seminary with me and now is a well known preacher said *Love without suffering is love without substance*. We can't expect the way of Jesus to be without significant bumps in the road.

-- We may not pay the cost that the Chinese student did for following Christ. But we will have our own crosses to bear. Not everyone will like our way of life. We will face criticism, we will face burdens we're not sure we can carry...if we are faithful followers of Christ.

-- James and John did not get their second wish. The right and left places by Jesus' side were taken by two thieves, as they hung on crosses flanking Jesus' own cross.

-- Importance in the kingdom of heaven is not determined by a resume of accomplishments on earth. It does not come from knowing great and influential people, even in a religious sense.

-- The critical questions we will be asked are *Did you walk the way of Jesus, even when it was difficult* and *Did you pour out your life in service, especially to the least of your sisters and brothers?*