

**“For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...and...
to give his life as a ransom for the many.”**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, there was a teenage boy who was constantly coming home late from school. There was no good reason for his tardiness; no amount of ‘discussion’ seemed to help. Finally, in desperation, the boy’s father sat him down and said:

**“The next time you come home late from school you are going to be given...
bread and water for your supper...and nothing else. Is that perfectly clear, son?”**

The boy looked straight into his father’s eyes and nodded. He understood perfectly.

A few days later, the boy came home even later than usual. His mother met him at the door, but didn’t say anything. His father met him in the living room, but he didn’t say anything, either.

That night, however, when they sat together at table, the boy’s heart sank down to his feet. His father’s plate was filled with food and his mother’s plate was filled with food. **BUT**...his own plate... contained only a single slice of bread. Next to his plate was a lonely glass of water.

The boy’s eyes stared—1st at the bread, then at the glass of water. This was the punishment his parents had warned him about. To make matters worse, tonight, he was absolutely famished!

The father waited for the full impact to sink in, then, quietly took the boy’s plate and placed it in front of himself. He, then, took his own plate...and put it in front of the boy.

The boy understood what his father was doing. His father was taking upon himself the punishment that he, the boy, had brought upon himself by his own, delinquent behavior.

Years later, that same boy, then a man, recalled that incident and said:

“All my life, I’ve known what God is like... by what my father did that night.”

So, why have I shared this story with you, you ask.

Well, I am glad you asked that question!

Because that story illustrates, perfectly, what Jesus meant in today’s Gospel, which I just read to you from St. Mark, when he said:

“The Son of Man came...to give his life...as a ransom for the many.”

Jesus came into the world to do for us what that father, in the story, did for his son. He came to pay the price for our sinfulness. And the price he paid... was his own death on the cross.

As usual, today's Gospel holds out a challenge to us. It challenges us to...

give our lives in loving service to others, as Jesus did for us.

(**←---LONG PAUSE---**→)

But...

"Where does one start?"

The best place to start doing this is... in our own homes and working places & situations. If we start in these places, chances are we will extend our loving services into other areas.

In time, we may find ourselves serving others as generously as did the father in today's story.

But... before we can hope to fly, we must 1st learn to walk.

*So-o, today's Gospel is an invitation to... **walk**.*

*It's an invitation to **begin** serving one another, right **now**, in our own family and work-situations.*

It's an invitation to begin imitating Jesus, who said:

**...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...and...
to give his life as a ransom for the many."**

May that loving God, our Abba, bless you...

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.