

Game Theory is a field of Mathematics that strategically studies decision making; evaluating models of cooperation and conflict in such diverse areas as economics, psychology, sociology, biology, and computer science.

The origins of Game Theory arose out of studies of what are called “zero-sum games.” That is, a game where someone wins, and someone else loses. What might be called a “winner-take-all,” or a “win-lose” type of situation.

“Non-zero-sum games,” however, could be classified as “win-win,” or “co-operative” situations. Where just because someone is in the lead, it doesn’t mean that anyone has to lose.

In a sense, we are drawn to “zero sum games.” Competitive sports are inherently “win-lose.” But (hopefully) for most, family life, work, and school fall more in the “co-operative” category.

Today is the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

In today’s Gospel reading, we move a bit further along in Mark’s text, skipping a section or two to reach our story.

Last week began a series of four events in Mark, meant to show that Jesus has power over (1) nature, (2) evil, (3) sickness, and finally (4) even death itself.

In last week’s Gospel, Jesus calms the storm. In intervening pericopes, He cures a demon-possessed man, and then heals a woman who has been sick for a dozen years. Today’s Gospel appears at first to be a defeat. On His way to heal the synagogue official’s daughter, word comes that she has already died, and that nothing can be done.

The servants’ pessimism reflects their thinking that death has won ... their master’s family has lost ... case closed.

Yet in this final episode of the four events, Mark ties in the previous three with Christ’s resurrection. Jesus’ victory over death is not some far-flung future event relegated to the eschaton. Rather, it is intimately tied to his previous victories over nature, evil, and sickness.

For Mark's readers in the First Century, and for us – twenty-one centuries after His Resurrection – it is a graphic reminder of the power of God at work in the Christian community.

Certainly, there are still storms and violent weather ... there is still evil at work in our lives and in the world ... people still get sick ... and eventually we all die. Yet because of Christ's passion and death ... resurrection and ascension ... and our intimate union with Him through Baptism and all the Sacraments, these realities can be infused with grace, mercy, and love and become opportunities for God's power to demonstrate His victory in our lives.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us be ever mindful of Christ's victory in our own lives ... and give Him permission to act powerfully in the areas of our lives where we truly need His victory. May the graces we receive in today's Eucharist give us a share in Christ's victory so that we may "excel ... in faith ... knowledge ... and ... love ... of Our Lord Jesus Christ."