

Scripture Study

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C



Opening prayer

Zechariah 12:10-11; 13:1

(Ps 63:2-6,8-9)

Galatians 3:26-29

Luke 9:18-24

Overview of the Gospel:

- Our Gospel Reading takes place right after that of two Sundays ago where we witnessed the feeding of the five thousand from five loaves and two fishes.
- Jesus is preparing at this point to end his ministry in Galilee and start his final journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). He has attracted much attention by his miracles and preaching; people are beginning to speculate who he might be (Luke 9:7-8).
- In the Jewish society of the time, anticipation was heavy for the appearance of the foretold Messiah, or “Anointed One,” which they saw as a military/royal leader who would free them from Roman rule and restore the Kingdom of Israel.
- When Jesus poses to the disciples the question that is on everyone’s lips, Peter, always the spokesmen of the twelve, steps forward and proclaims, under special insight from God (Matthew 16:17) that Jesus is indeed this long awaited Messiah.
- Jesus accepts this recognition, but not in the way the disciples (or we) might expect (verse 21). Furthermore, he goes on to reveal what will be required of Peter, the apostles, and all those who will dare to follow Jesus as the Messiah of God.

Questions:

- Why would Jesus be interested in an “opinion poll” (verse 18)? Why does he go on to ask the follow-up question (verse 20)?
- Why doesn’t Jesus want them to tell anyone he is the Messiah (verse 21)?
- How might the disciples have felt about Jesus’ words in verse 22? In light of Old Testament foreshadowings and prophecies such as found in the First Reading, do you think the Jews of Jesus’ time (including the Apostles) should have more readily recognized him as the Messiah? Why or why not?
- What activities are key to following Christ (verse 23)?
- What does it mean specifically to you to: (a) deny yourself, (b) take up your cross daily, (c) follow Christ, and (d) lose your life for Jesus’ sake?
- Knowing what you do now, would you reconsider your present commitment to Christ? Why or why not?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 2600, 1435, 2015, 1336

Closing Prayer

On this earth everyone has his cross. But we must act in such away that we be not the bad, but the good thief. – St. Padre Pio

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings!

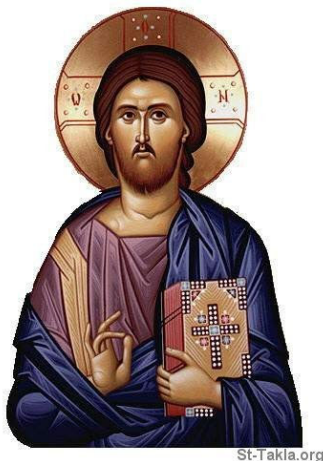
"As Jesus was praying alone the disciples were with him"

Scripture: Luke 9:18-24

Now it happened that as he was praying alone the disciples were with him; and he asked them, "Who do the people say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist; but others say, Eli'jah; and others, that one of the old prophets has risen." And he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." But he charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." And he said to all, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it.

Meditation: Who is Jesus for you? Many in Israel recognized Jesus as a mighty man of God, even comparing him with the greatest of the prophets. Peter, always quick to respond whenever Jesus spoke, professed that Jesus was truly the Christ of God. No mortal being could have revealed this to Peter, but only God. Through the eyes of faith Peter grasped who Jesus truly was. He was the first apostle to publicly recognize Jesus as the Anointed One whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world as Lord and Savior (Luke 2:11, Acts 2:36). Christ is the Greek word for Messiah, the Hebrew word which is also translated as the Anointed One.

Why did Jesus command his disciples to be silent about his identity as the anointed Son of



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God? They were, after all, appointed to proclaim the good news to everyone. Jesus knew that they did not yet fully understand his mission and how he would accomplish it. Cyril of Alexandria, a 5th century Church father, explains the reason for this silence:

There were things yet unfulfilled which must also be included in their preaching about him. They must also proclaim the cross, the passion, and the death in the flesh. They must preach the resurrection of the dead, that great and truly glorious sign by which testimony is borne him that the Emmanuel is truly God and by nature the Son of God the Father. He utterly abolished death and wiped out destruction. He robbed hell, and overthrew the tyranny of the enemy. He took away the sin of the world, opened the gates above to the dwellers upon earth, and united earth to heaven. These things proved him to be, as I said, in truth God. He commanded them, therefore, to guard the mystery by a seasonable silence until the whole plan of the dispensation should arrive at a suitable conclusion. [COMMENTARY ON LUKE, HOMILY 49]

Jesus told his disciples that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die in order that God's work of redemption might be accomplished. How startled the disciples were when they heard this word. How different are God's thoughts and ways from our thoughts and ways (Isaiah 55:8). Through humiliation, suffering, and death on the cross Jesus broke the powers of sin and death and won for us eternal life and freedom from the slavery of sin and from the oppression of our enemy, Satan, the father of lies and the deceiver of humankind.

If we want to share in Christ's victory, then we must also take up our cross and follow him where he leads us. What is the "cross" that you and I must take up each day? When my will crosses with God's will, then his will must be done. To know Jesus Christ is to know the power of his victory on the cross where he defeated sin and conquered death through his resurrection. The Holy Spirit gives each of us the gifts and strength we need to live as sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit gives us faith to know the Lord Jesus personally as our Redeemer, and the power to live the gospel faithfully, and the courage to witness to others the joy, truth, and freedom of the gospel. Who do you say that Jesus is?

"Lord Jesus, I believe and I profess that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Take my life, my will, and all that I have, that I may be wholly yours now and forever."

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