

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
September 13, 2009

Gospel: (Mark 8:27-35)

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples this question: “*Who do people say that I am?*” They replied, “Some, John the Baptizer, other, Elijah, still others, one of the prophets.” “*And you,* he went on to ask, “*who do you say that I am?*” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah!” Then he strictly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man had to suffer much, be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, be put to death, and rise three days later. . . He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them: “*If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and follow in my steps. Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.*”

Reflection:

The cross is exalted—honored and venerated—because it brings life. But the only way we can share in this life is *believing* in Jesus and *taking up* our own cross so that death leads to life. Believing in Jesus implies sharing in Jesus’ death as well as his resurrection. For most of us, we readily see the crosses in our lives. Perhaps the challenge of this gospel is to see beyond our crosses to glory and life. This is the challenge of the cross: to see that glory in our everyday lives. Good surrounds all of us; the cross invites us to see that good—out of pain and poverty can come a new life that has value, meaning, and purpose for self and others. (Living Liturgy, p.208)

Vincentian Meditation:

The cross is always seen in light of the resurrection. Without the resurrection, the cross remains in darkness. Also, there is no resurrection without the cross. The cross of Christ, therefore, stands with the resurrection at the center of the good news we believe in. Together, they tell us how deeply God loves us. They evangelize us. And, besides the cross of Jesus, the crosses of his members can evangelize us, too. Our lives can be transformed by the suffering love of Jesus’ followers, who fill up his sufferings in their bodies: the sick, who bear illness with courage; the grieving, who hope against hope; the dying, who clearly trust in the resurrection. The “foolishness” of the cross will be credible on our lips only if we have learned its “wisdom” from sharing in the suffering of our brothers and sisters. (Maloney, He Hears the Cry of the Poor, p. 48-49)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

How have you been evangelized by others who bear their cross in faith and hope?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, you became obedient even unto death, death on the cross:

-may we help to carry the burdens of others.

Jesus, you carried your cross with faith and trust,

-may we patiently endure our own times of suffering. Amen

