

TWENTY FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B; HOMILY HIGHLIGHTS

READINGS; 1st Is. 50: 4c-9a, 2nd James 2: 14-18, Gospel Mark 8: 27-35

“But who do you say that I am? ... You are the Christ”

Introduction; we are called upon to meditate on the theme of the suffering servant of God. Prophet Isaiah speaks four times about this servant, and in the Gospel of today we see it happening in the life of Jesus, who though was rich, became poor for our sake. Jesus suffered death on the cross for our sake and brought us back to God through his suffering we were justified. In our lives we encounter suffering in different forms, this should not be taken as an end but as a means to a higher good, that is unity with Christ the suffering servant of God.

Reflection; the call to a balanced life between faith and works of faith is a challenge to most of us. Words and action of a believer must be taken as a formula for a true Christian and a catholic above all. What we know, read, and believe from the word of God, and should be translated to real life. Faith with actions that proceed from what we profess by our lips. Jesus' speech to the crowd and his disciples about self-denial and taking the cross daily and follow him is based on the practice of the faith. When we try to translate our faith into actions, we encounter challenges and oppositions; these are what contain our crosses and sufferings.

The second reading of this Sunday continues from that of last Sunday on how to deal with our needy brethren. If one has neither food nor clothing, we need to consider their needs and not only wishing them the best by our words. We are to do something tangible to change their lives and make them experience true love from our faith. The world is in need of love, witness and solidarity. We are challenged and invited to meet the hungry, naked, thirsty, strangers, prisoners and the sick and provide for their basic needs. These are the ones whom Christ always associates with, the criteria for judgment on the last day will also go through these groups (Math. 25: 31-46).

The question put before the disciples of Jesus about who he is; remains valid today and forever. Some of us have an answer to that question and others are still struggling finding an answer. The best way to find a true and real answer is by putting the faith we profess into action. It is by taking up our cross every day and follow Christ. It is by accepting suffering as a means to unification with Christ and not as a punishment. If we accept our challenges in the life we live with faith we become true followers of Christ, by our actions not only by words or lips service.

Human suffering and death have being re-created and exalted by the love of Christ. He freely accepted them all in order to raise a fallen humanity to the status of children and heirs of the kingdom of God. The way of the cross is the way that is narrow but has life and love in it. We are praying for strength, courage and wisdom from above that we may take our cross and follow Christ.