



## ***24<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME*** ***YEAR B – September 16, 2018***

Scripture scholars tell us that this passage in St. Mark's Gospel today (Mark 8:27-35) is the pivotal point of his whole gospel. The first seven chapters lead us to the point where we are confronted with the question that all of us must answer for ourselves.. Who is Jesus? Is he just a most unusual human being or is he something more than that?

It doesn't matter what your parents believe. It doesn't matter what your brothers and sisters believe. It doesn't matter what your friends believe. What matters in your life, is what you believe.

If you say he is just a human being, you have made an act of faith. If you say along with Peter that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, you have made an act of faith. If you do believe that he is the Messiah and the Son of God, then that makes him one of a kind. There never has been anybody like him before him and there has never been anyone like him since.

If Jesus is God, then everything he did and everything he said becomes very important for those who believe. And if you are one of those believers, then Jesus becomes very important for you. He says he came into our world to comfort those who are disturbed and to disturb those who are too comfortable.

Today, he tells us that if we want to be his followers, we must take up our cross every day and follow him. That is not easy to do and it raises a question, “What kind of cross is Jesus talking about?”

Clearly, Jesus is not talking about the crosses we create for ourselves. He's not talking about the crosses we fashion with sinful pride, avarice, lust, anger, gluttony, envy or laziness. We all have some crosses like that, but Jesus came to set us free from those.

Jesus is talking about the cross that we must carry if we want to be his disciples, the cross we must carry if we want to follow him. There is a price to pay if we want to do that.

To do that, we must first get rid of the crosses we have fashion for ourselves and focus our attention on the needs of others. We must stop looking back and let go of the past. He who lives in the past is already dead. We must learn how to love as Jesus did. We must forgive those who have hurt us or sinned against us and ask forgiveness from those whom we have hurt.

Is there a cross involved in doing all that. You bet there is. And it is that cross that Jesus wants us to carry. He wants us to be happy people. If we are not happy, it's not God's fault. We are carrying the wrong cross.

For a few moments in silence, reflect on the crosses you carry. Which ones do you need to put down? Which one do you need to pick up – every day?

