



### Message from Fr. Leandro "Lines" Dela Cruz

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Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Every Gospel story has four layers of interpretation and historical meaning. First there is the historical time and place in which a certain action took place or the setting in which Jesus taught a certain parable or gave a teaching to the Apostles. Then there is this historical personal acceptance when their eyes were opened, and they could see clearly the meaning of Christ's actions and words. The third layer is the situation of the individual community where the Gospel was written and edited. Thus, Mark's community had different problems from Matthew's. And Luke's audience was different from John's. Finally, we have our contemporary situation and the questions we ask about how the Gospel is to be interpreted in our daily life.

Therefore, when in today's Gospel Jesus asks Peter, "Who do you say that I am," there are really four answers to that very important question. On a historical level, as the story relates to the historical ministry of Jesus, we see that Peter has perceived Jesus as the Messiah of Judaism. But at the same time, Peter does not realize that the Messiah would not be a glorious military and/or political hero. The Chosen One would have to suffer and die. Peter is rebuked for rejecting the cross. The disciples would not understand the meaning of Jesus' mission until after the resurrection when they would realize that Jesus would have to die in order to rise.

**MARK'S CHURCH AND OUR COMMUNITY:** The third layer of Gospel interpretation is the meaning of this story in the context of Mark's Christian community in Rome, where the Gospel was written thirty years after the crucifixion and resurrection. Mark's church was under persecution by the Roman authorities. Its leaders were being executed or imprisoned. Mark addresses this problem through Peter, i.e., Mark is telling his fellow Christians that faith means suffering, that just as Jesus had to accept the cross they also would have to suffer for the faith. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples, "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 preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's will preserve it."

This passage is the very center and core of Mark's Gospel. These words remain true today for the contemporary Christian and the Church. Followers of Jesus must accept the cross if they are to be like the Master. The only one who is willing to carry the cross as a disciple and truly answers that call really understands Jesus. The way of discipleship is not easy, and one may be tempted to shrink from what it entails. However, this is not what Jesus asked Peter and it is not what Mark asked his troubled flock. A life lived by the Gospel can only result in a confrontation with the values of "the world" and lead to persecution.

Let us continue to pray for peace in our country and the rest of the world. We pray for all the victims of terrorism, especially those whose lives perish on the September 11 attack twenty years ago. We ask the good Lord to enlighten the minds and hearts of those who sow fear and violence that it is only through love and charity that peace is achieved.

The Religious Education staff is out in the Gallery of Light to help our families register their children in the program. Please be reminded that as parents, it is our obligation to pass on and educate our children in our faith and especially prepare them for the reception of the Sacraments, like, 1st Penance, 1st Eucharist, and Confirmation. Kindly approach the table of Gary and/or Teresa for any help or question/s you may have. Those who are interested to become catechists or volunteers are most welcome to see these wonderful guys.

Also, our PARISH PICNIC is fast approaching. The Knights of Columbus members are out in front of the church to invite you and sell out tickets. After your summer vacation, we look forward to seeing you at this come-back exciting affair to our

**church as one big family of Saint Ann. See you around for fun, food, and happy healthy chats (no rumors please, lol).**

**God Loves You.**

**Listen to the Pope deliver his message regarding the COVID-19 Vaccine:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWf3Ji11EaU>**