



August 30 2020 // Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time // Lectionary: 124 // Gospel MT 16:21-27

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct."

Spiritual Reflection: Throughout the Gospel, Jesus challenges our often-illusory, distorted relationships with such things as money, food, technology, sports - diversions and pursuits that eat up our time and energy at the expense of the important relationships we have with family and friends - and God. Jesus asks his disciples to detach from the ephemeral and shallow in order to attach to the lasting, fulfilling things of God: compassion, reconciliation, justice. If we are true to Jesus' call to discipleship, we will find ourselves embracing values that run counter to what society honors: taking the first lonely and difficult steps toward reconciliation and peace, putting aside our own needs and wants for what is best for family and community. As disciples, we choose to take up the cross, not out of a sense of self-loathing or pessimism, but out of a sense of conviction and hope that the demands of the cross will result in the life and love of the Easter promise.

Spiritual Questions

1. What do you do to help you understand God's way are the best way?
2. Whose opinion do you value the most?
3. What gives you true peace?
4. What troubles you most about your cross?
5. Who carries their cross in a way that inspires you?