



BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

September 12, 2021

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 131

Gospel Mk 8:27-35

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” They said in reply, “John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets.” And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said to him in reply, “You are the Christ.” Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him. He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.” He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “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 and that of the gospel will save it.”

Spiritual Reflection: Archbishop Fulton Sheen writes the following: “No other Apostle arouses so much sympathy in a person’s heart as Peter. He seems very close to each of us in his conflicts and emotions, his strength and his weakness, his resolve to be heroic and his disastrous failure to live up to his aspiration. At one moment he is humble, at another proud. He affirms fidelity to his Lord, then denies Him. He is so supernatural, yet so very weak and natural. He extols as divine the Master he loves, only to be frightened by a servant girl into saying that he does not know “the man”. No chain is stronger than its weakest link, and the weakest link in the entire apostolic chain was the first link, Peter—and the Son of God holds on to that. Hence the “gates of hell shall not prevail.”

Spiritual Questions

1. How does God use St. Peter in his messed-upness, help you realize that God wants you as a coworker as well?
2. Think of your most disastrous failing. How does it feel to know that God still loves you?
3. Think of your most successful moment. How does it feel to know God loves you the same at that moment as your weakest moment?
4. What other lessons can you learn from Peter?
5. How can you help the weakest link in your parish?