

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD



August 31, 2014

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

Archbishop Fulton Sheen writes the following about Peter in his book on the priesthood: "Peter was willing to confess Christ the Priest, but not Christ the Victim. Men called to be rocks can become stones of stumbling.

The priesthood means imitation of Christ, and imitation means self-crucifixion. An unwillingness on the part of a priest to follow Christ to Calvary can sound to Our Blessed Lord only like the voice of the devil himself, that is to say, the voice of Simon repeating the sentiments with which Satan at the very start of Christ's public life had tried to tempt Him away from the Cross. Our Lord did not take away Peter's vocation. He contented Himself with warning him that the flesh was with him and that in a moment of overconfidence he would fall. Peter is thus set forth by Our Blessed Lord as a constant reminder that it is in their strongest qualities, unless they are periodically renewed by divine grace, that men are most liable to fail."

Spiritual Question

1. Are you ready to do things God's way?
2. Which crosses are you trying to avoid?
3. How does one carry his or her cross?
4. Peter relied on himself at that moment instead of God. When do you rely on yourself?
5. How are you with relying on God's grace?