

Friday of the Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 9:18-22): Once when Jesus was praying in solitude, and the disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” They said in reply, “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, ‘One of the ancient prophets has arisen.’” Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said in reply, “The Christ of God.” He rebuked them and directed them not to tell this to anyone.

He said, “The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.”

“Who do the crowds say that I am? Who do you say that I am?”

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Today, in the Gospel we find two questions that our Master is asking all of us. The first one requires an approximate statistical reply: “Who do the crowds say that I am?” (Lk 9:18). This forces us to look around and see how others answer this question: our neighbors, our work mates, our friends, our closest relatives... We look about ourselves and we feel more or less responsible or close —depending upon the case— for some of the replies given by those who have some connection with our environment, and us “the people”... And, their answers say a lot, inform us, position us and make us realize what those who live next to us are looking for, what they need, what they desire. It helps us to tune in, to discover a meeting point with the other party, to grow closer...

But, there is a second question for us: “Who do you say that I am?” (Lk 9:20). This becomes a fundamental question knocking at our door; a question demanding from each one of us: adhesion or denial; veneration or aloofness; to walk along with Him

and in Him or just end up in a relationship of simple sympathy... This is a delicate and determining question, because it affects us. What do our lips and attitude say? Do we want to be faithful to Him who is and gives a meaning to our life? Is there to be found a sincere disposition in us to follow Him in our journey through life? Are we ready to go with Him to the Jerusalem of the Cross and the Glory?

“It is a path of Cross and Resurrection (...). The Cross is the Exaltation of Christ. He said it too: ‘When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to Me’. It is evident, therefore, that the Cross is the Glory and exaltation of Christ” (St. Andrew of Crete). Are we then ready to move on to Jerusalem? Only with Him and in Him, is this not so?

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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"Ah!, my God!, that most of the men today continue shouting: "Not to this one, but to Barabbas", every time they despise Christ for a pleasure, for honor, for an relief" (Saint Alphonsus Liguori)

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"The event of the Cross reveals its full meaning only if "this man" who suffered and died on the Cross "truly was the Son of God", to use the words uttered by the centurion as he stood before the Crucified Christ" (Benedict XVI)

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"Since our sins made the Lord Christ suffer the torment of the cross, those who plunge themselves into disorders and crimes crucify the Son of God anew in their hearts (for he is in them) and hold him up to contempt... (cf. Heb 6:6)" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no 598)