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, there are two questions that the Master himself asks everyone. The first question asks for an approximate statistical answer: "Who do the crowds say that I am?" (Lk 9:18). It makes us stop and think about how others resolve the question: neighbors, work colleagues, friends, closest relatives... We look at our surroundings and feel more or less responsible or close - depending on the case - to some of these responses formulated by those who are involved with us and our environment, "the people"... The answer tells us a lot. It informs us and situates us, making us aware of what those around us want, need and seek. It helps us connect with others, find common ground, and progress...

There is a second question that He asks us: "But who do you say that I am?" (Lk 9:20). It is a fundamental question that knocks at our door, that begs each one of us: acceptance or rejection; veneration or indifference; walking with Him and in Him or ending up with a mere sympathy... This question is delicate; it is decisive because it affects us. What do our lips and our attitudes say? Do we want to be faithful to the One who is and gives meaning to our being? Do we have a sincere willingness to follow Him on the paths of life? Are we willing to accompany Him to the Jerusalem of the cross and the glory?

“It is a path of cross and resurrection (...). The cross is Christ’s triumph. He himself also said: ‘When I am lifted up, then I will draw all men to myself. (...) The cross is Christ’s glory and triumph.” (St. Andrew of Crete). Ready to move forward toward Jerusalem? Only with Him and in Him, right?

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "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 a relief" (Saint Alphonsus Liguori)

- "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)

- "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)