

## SUNDAY 22 (A) (2020)

### A) CONTRAST

- There is a marked contrast between last week's Gospel and the one we have just heard.
- There, Peter is praised for his declaration of faith in the divinity of Jesus.
- "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- He is promised the keys of the kingdom.
- Here, he is condemned and labelled as the Devil.
- Last week he was hailed as the Rock; today he is an obstacle, a stumbling-block.
- But he is merely trying to protect the One he loves.
- And he is also trying to protect himself.

### B) FIRST PROPHECY OF THE PASSION

- As soon as Peter and the disciples begin to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, he begins to teach them a hard truth about himself.
- He is the Messiah, but not the kind of Messiah they might be expecting.
- He will not be a political Messiah; he will not reveal himself through power and force and majesty.
- He will reveal himself, and he will reveal the love of the Father, above all through weakness, poverty, suffering and death.
- Outwardly, he will be a complete failure, but it will be a failure that the Father will turn into the greatest success, the greatest triumph.

### C) PETER'S REACTION

- But Peter cannot see that, and he starts to remonstrate with Jesus: "This must not happen to you."
- In response Jesus gives him what must have seemed like the sharpest rebuke: "Get behind me, Satan!"
- Satan is the adversary, the one who opposes God's plans and does all he can to frustrate them.
- Here, Peter is doing Satan's work: he is tempting Jesus to turn away from the Father's will and take the easy route.
- When Jesus says to Peter, "Get behind me," it is in fact a rebuke which is given in kindness.
- He is not saying to Peter, "Begone, go away from me."
- But rather, he is saying, "Get behind me, get back into line, be a true disciple, follow me."

#### D) TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

- Then Jesus takes this particular incident to teach a lesson for all people, not just for Peter.
- If anyone wants to be a true disciple of the Lord, then he or she must be prepared to follow the same path that Jesus himself is about to take.
- First the disciple must renounce himself.
- We renounce ourselves by striving always to say no to self and yes to God;
- to dethrone ourselves and to enthrone him;
- to say constantly and to mean it: thy will be done.
- Then the disciple must take up his cross.
- To take up one's cross can mean so many different things:
  - It can mean accepting one's own limitations, accepting the fact that we are not perfect, that we make mistakes, that we fall short in our striving for the good.
  - It can mean accepting other people's limitations, and not allowing these to hinder us in our efforts to love and to serve.
  - It can mean accepting the burdens that life brings, through illness or misfortune.
  - And finally the disciple must follow Christ.
- he or she must be like him in standing up for what is true and good, and to accept the consequences.
- the Cross represents "the sufferings, persecutions, martyrdoms, indifference, moral struggles, lovelessness which every follower of Christ is bound to meet." (W.J. Harrington).
- And every true disciple of Christ is called upon, each of us in our own way, to follow in his footsteps.

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