

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus is quick to correct Peter when the latter tries to steer him away from the death that is part of his mission as Messiah. In a series of apparently paradoxical phrases our Lord goes on to explain what his disciples' commitment to him entails. As the Catechism teaches: "The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails the asceticism and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes" (CCC, 2015).

Similarly, St. Thomas Aquinas, in his reflections on the Cross, writes: "Whoever wishes to live perfectly should do nothing but disdain what Christ disdained on the cross and desire what he desired, for the cross exemplifies every virtue. If you seek the example of love: 'Greater love than this no man has, than to lay down his life for his friends.' Such a man was Christ on the cross [...] If you seek patience, you will find no better example than the cross [...] Christ endured much on the cross, and did so patiently [...] If you seek an example of humility, look upon the crucified one, for God wished to be judged by Pontius Pilate and to die. If you seek an example of obedience, follow him who became obedient to the Father even unto death [...] If you seek an example of despising earthly things, follow him who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Upon the cross he was stripped, mocked, spat upon, struck, crowned with thorns, and given only vinegar and gall to drink" (*Office of Readings*).

Take up the Cross, therefore, and follow Jesus, and go forward into eternal life. Christ has gone before us, bearing His Cross; He died for us on the Cross, that we also may bear our cross, and desire to die on the cross with Him. For if we die with Him, we will also live with Him. And if we share His sufferings, we will also share His glory – the glory of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Father Frei