



What Does it Mean to Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus?

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTION

Dear Friends in Christ,

Last Sunday, Peter got it right: "You are the Christ." Today, he gets it terribly wrong.

When Jesus reveals that being the Messiah means suffering, rejection, and the cross, Peter pulls him aside: "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." It is a very human reaction. We want a Christianity without a cross, a discipleship without cost.

Jesus' response is sharp: "Get behind me, Satan!" Peter is thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.

This Gospel asks us a difficult question: What kind of Messiah are we following?

Jeremiah in the first reading knows this struggle. He feels duped by God, mocked for speaking His word, yet he cannot stay silent – "it becomes like fire burning in my heart." To follow God is not always comfortable, but it is unavoidable once His love has touched us.

St. Paul gives us the way forward: "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice... Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed."

To be transformed means to stop measuring our lives by comfort, success, or approval. Jesus says: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

The cross we carry today may be forgiveness when it's easier to hold a grudge, honesty when lying is easier, or service when we are tired.

We do not lose ourselves when we carry it. We finally find ourselves.

Have a blessed week!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza,
Pastor

