



CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation

August 31, 2008
A)

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle

Gospel reading

Matthew 16:21-27

WALKING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST
CAMINANDO EN LA LUZ DE CRISTO
MACHÉ LAN LUMIÉ AK JÉZHKRI

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct."

Brief commentary:

Today we read about Jesus' first prediction of his passion as narrated by Matthew. This text follows last Sunday's gospel in which Peter, inspired by God, confessed Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. The present scenario is very different. Here Peter appears used by Satan in an attempt to derail Jesus from his mission. What a contrast between the two dialogues! The same Peter who acknowledged Jesus' messianic identity rejected the possibility that it could involve any suffering. Just as he was blessed last week for his faith, his attitude is now rebuked as coming from Satan. There is no ambiguity in the gospel; Jesus' earthly future will involve suffering and death. The disciples are called to identify with Jesus. Just as they were given a share in Jesus' power to heal and to preach (see chapter 10:1), they are also given a share in Jesus' suffering.

Today's reading offers three significant messages:

- The willingness to follow Jesus even to suffering and death is the condition for true discipleship.
- Peter and the disciples did not grasp that being Messiah committed Jesus to human suffering.
- We are challenged to walk with Jesus through failure and pain into Jerusalem if we are to enjoy with him the victory of the resurrection.

For our shared or personal reflection:

After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.

1. Have I ever being enticed to avoid my responsibilities? How did I respond to the temptation?
2. Am I a disciple of "good times" only or am I willing to walk with the poor and the sick through their suffering? Who is asking me to walk with him or her to "Jerusalem" today?

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 363; 540; 554; 607-609; 618; 736; 1021-1022.