



## Friday of the twenty-fifth week in Ordinary Time Year 1

### Gospel

Lk 9:18-22

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

*You are the Christ of God. The Son of Man must suffer much.*

One day when Jesus was praying alone in the presence of his disciples he put this question to them, 'Who do the crowds say I am?' And they answered, 'John the Baptist; others Elijah; and others say one of the ancient prophets come back to life.' 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' It was Peter who spoke up. 'The Christ of God' he said. But he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone anything about this.

'The Son of Man' he said 'is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.'

### Homily Fr Graham Fullick Luke 9:18-22 Who do you say I am Destined to Suffer 230921

The identity of Jesus is an important matter for salvation. The devil tries to control Jesus by naming him, or by diminishing his name e.g. in Luke the Gerasene Demoniac (Lk 8:26-31) names Jesus "Son of the Most High God" while at the same time asking Jesus what he had to do with him and not to torment him. Detractor Pharisees said he cast out demons only by Beelzebul (Mt 12:24) and not by the power of God. From Jesus' followers and even some detractors we hear "master, lord, prophet, rabbi and teacher". But this confession by Peter "You are the Messiah, the Christ" i.e. the One who was prophesised in the Old Testament as the one who was to come, the fulfilment of all hope in a saviour, this is another level entirely. (We hear it too from Mary Magdalene and from John the Baptist as "The Lamb of God".) Peter has received and spoken a revelation from the Father. That takes faith and courage and saying that he, Peter is less than God, not equal to him.

Jesus now tells the Apostles of his impending rejection and being put to death. Do you notice in passing that before the crucifixion Pilate asks the sinful, gullible crowd who they want released, Jesus or the criminal Barabbas? Bar Abbas means in Hebrew "Son of the Father". The people reject Jesus the true son of the Father for the false son of a father, Barabbas. They betray Jesus by the very name meant to save them. Yet for Peter, blessed is

the name of Jesus. Unfortunately he too denies Jesus, trying to avoid his own suffering and death, but Jesus hears Peter's confession of faith so Peter can repent of that.

Jesus immediately explains the nature of his kingdom which is for the Son to suffer grievously, to die and be raised up. They do not know it yet, but theirs too is an apostleship of suffering service, but a unique one for the humble who will be exalted. Peter and we must follow Jesus' directions in life. Jesus did not agree to suffering, but he accepted it for God's glory and our promise of eternal life. We too must deny ourselves: we must not "set our minds on human things, but divine things".

These to us are hard words for suffering our crosses in illness in hospital, for having our names besmirched for being Christian or for taking the missionary message of Jesus to a hostile place. We have the assurance that hell will never prevail if we answer our names with Jesus' name: Yes, I am a Christian. I will do it. Life has meaning. Jesus' peace has given our lives true meaning, hope and joy—even in self-denial and suffering. And Jesus will say to us as to Peter "Blessed are you, Christian, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" and "for you who have lost your life for my sake will find it."

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