

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, MUMBLES

Reflection for

Twenty-Second Sunday (A), August 30, 2020

(May be used for Home Prayer Service)

Dominican Friars, Swansea

This reflection may be used during the home prayer service. Please see the home prayer service sheet for details.

CHRISTIANS: DISCIPLES IN SUFFERING AND GLORY

When he professed his faith in Jesus, Peter was praised by the Lord. In the following passage, Jesus rebukes Peter for attempting to prevent his passion through which he would redeem the world. In the preceding passage, Peter's confession was inspired by the Father. In today's reading, his 'flesh and blood' objects to a suffering Messiah. So, Jesus teaches us that suffering is the path to eternal glory.

Jesus Goes to Jerusalem: Jerusalem is known as the City of David. After he conquered the city from the Jebusites, David made it his Capital City. He rested the Ark of the Covenant there. In this city, God gave David rest from all his enemies (cf. 2 Sam 5 - 6). For the Jews, Jerusalem is the city of the Lord. It is where the Temple is located. That is where God meets his people. That is where God has chosen to dwell with his people (Ps 132:13-14). Also, Isaiah, the Messianic Prophet, received a vision about Judah and Jerusalem. He saw Jerusalem as the centre of peace and unity for the world. In his prophesy, Jerusalem would become the place where people would gather to worship Yahweh in spirit and truth (Is 2:1-5).

Jesus, the New David: Jesus chooses to go to Jerusalem to accomplish his earthly mission. Like David his father, it is in Jerusalem that Christ would defeat the enemies of humanity: sin, evil and death. It is also in Christ that the peace and unity promised by Isaiah has come to its fulfilment. However, people will no longer have to go to Jerusalem to worship because Christ has constituted a new people for himself. These people are those who worship the Father in truth and in Spirit (Jn 4:24) in his Church.

Jesus Rebukes Peter: When Peter learnt about the passion Jesus was to undergo, he wanted to stop him from this mission because it involved suffering. Understandably, Peter could not imagine how the Christ, the Son of the living God (Mt 16:16), would be subject to the power of humans and that of death. Peter could not see that beyond the death of Jesus is his glory. He stood in front of Jesus to block the way to the

cross. Jesus recognised in his words the same spirit that tempted him in the desert (Mt 4:1-11). Thus, Jesus rebuked Peter and told him to rather be behind him to follow him to learn the way of the cross which is the path to glory. It is by following Jesus that Peter would act as a true disciple who faithfully follows the Master. If we desire to share in the glory of Christ, then we should be prepared to share in his suffering. As his disciples, we should also be willing to carry our crosses daily and follow Jesus.

The Conditions of Following Jesus: In the First Reading (Jer 20:7-9), Jeremiah complained that God deceived him into becoming his prophet. When Jeremiah answered the call of God to be a prophet, he thought it would be easy and full of success in the human way of thinking. His life was rather filled with troubles and persecution. Peter was thinking like Jeremiah and was not ready to accept suffering. Jesus then laid bare the conditions of being his disciples so that no one would lament like Jeremiah that they were deceived into becoming Christians. In the Second Reading (Rom 12:1-2), St Paul responds to the theme of true followership by instructing us not to conform to the standards of this world. The standard of this world is that which rejects every form of pain and suffering. As Christians, we believe that our sufferings are but means to attaining eternal glory with Christ.

Crossing Over with Our Crosses: Let us assume that as we carry our crosses, we are confronted with a river. Our crosses could become a bridge we place across the river to enable us cross over. The other side of the river is the New and Glorious Jerusalem spoken about in Revelations 21. Jesus has spoken of the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem (Mt 24). Thus, this New Jerusalem is our heavenly homeland which God has promised to those who remain faithful to the end. In heaven, we shall dwell in the glory of Christ which he attained for through his passion and death. As we carry our crosses daily, may we follow Christ to the end to wear the crown of glory. Amen.