

The Living Word

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

12 September 2021

First Reading Is 50:5-9

I gave my body to those who struck me.

The Lord has opened my ear.

For my part, I made no resistance,
neither did I turn away.

I offered my back to those who struck me,
my cheeks to those who tore at my beard;
I did not cover my face
against insult and spittle.

The Lord comes to my help,
so that I am untouched by the insults.
So, too, I set my face like flint;
I know I shall not be shamed.

My vindicator is here at hand.
Does anyone start proceedings against
me?

Then let us go to court together.
Who thinks he has a case against me?
Let him approach me.
The Lord is coming to my help,
who dare condemn me?

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 114:1-6. 8-9. R. v.9

*(R.) I will walk in the presence
of the Lord,
in the land of the living.*

or

(R.) Alleluia!

1. I love the Lord for he has heard
the cry of my appeal;
for he turned his ear to me
in the day when I called him. *(R.)*

2. They surrounded me, the snares
of death,
with anguish of the tomb;
they caught me, sorrow and distress.
I called on the Lord's name.
O Lord my God, deliver me! *(R.)*
3. How gracious is the Lord, and just;
our God has compassion.
The Lord protects the simple hearts;
I was helpless so he saved me! *(R.)*
4. He has kept my soul from death,
my eyes from tears
and my feet from stumbling.
I will walk in the presence of the Lord
in the land of the living. *(R.)*

Second Reading Jas 2:14-18

Faith without good works is dead.

Take the case, my brothers, of someone who has never done a single good act but claims that he has faith. Will that faith save him? If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, 'I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty,' without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead.

This is the way to talk to people of that kind: 'You say you have faith and I have good deeds; I will prove to you that I have faith by showing you my good deeds – now you prove to me that you have faith without any good deeds to show.'



Reflection by Greg Sunter

‘But you, who do you say I am?’ This would have to be one of the most powerful questions of the gospels. It echoes down the centuries and is just as relevant today as it ever was. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Our answer to that question is perhaps the most revealing statement of our faith. Our answer no doubt changes over time as we grow in understanding and as we experience the ups and downs of life, but nonetheless, just like Peter in the gospel passage, our answer remains a clear statement of our faith. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Just a good guy who lived 2,000 years ago? A role model? A friend? God made flesh? The Word come down from heaven? Nobody? Everybody? Our saviour? An inspired man of God? The Messiah?

Perhaps you’ve never tried to actually answer the question yourself. It is a confronting question, ‘Who do you say I am?’ It’s confronting because, as Christian people, we believe that our actions are a reflection of our beliefs and values. It’s confronting because whatever we say in answer to that question has implications for the way we live. ‘Who do you say I am?’ You see, the question is in the present tense, not the past. It doesn’t ask ‘Who do you say I was?’; it asks, ‘Who do you say I AM?’ The very question asks us to recognise that Jesus was not just some guy who lived 2,000 years ago but rather someone who continues to be a presence in our lives today. And he stands before each and every one of us today and asks that same, demanding, confronting, purposeful question: ‘Who do YOU say I am?’

Gospel Acclamation Gal 6:14

Alleluia, alleluia!

*My only glory is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which crucifies the world to me and me to the world.*

Alleluia!

Gospel Mk 8:27-35

You are the Christ ... the Son of Man was destined to suffer much.

Jesus and his disciples left for the villages round Caesarea Philippi. On the way he put this question to his disciples, ‘Who do people say I am?’ And they told him. ‘John the Baptist,’ they said, ‘others Elijah; others again, one of the prophets.’ ‘But you,’ he asked, ‘who do you say I am?’ Peter spoke up and said to him, ‘You are the Christ.’ And he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone about him.

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man was destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be put to death, and after three days to rise again; and he said all this quite openly. Then, taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. But, turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said to him, ‘Get behind me, Satan! Because the way you think is not God’s way but man’s.’

He called the people and his disciples to him and said, ‘If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.’

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