

Gospel Reflection

Last week's Gospel reading and this week's follow immediately upon one another... In only a hundred words or so, Jesus has moved from referring to Peter as the rock on which the church will be built to calling him "Satan." So has Jesus founded the church on a "Satan"? Of course not. Jesus Christ founded, and continues to build – through the presence of his Body given to us, the church, by the Spirit of baptism – on human beings. He knows now, as he knew then, our frailness and built-in shortcomings. Today he begins his explanation of what his role as Messiah will mean during his last days in Jerusalem. And poor Peter leaps to the wrong conclusion, as many of us would, and still do. Peter is insistent upon following the conventional religious wisdom, the status quo, the commonly understood view of the Messiah. But it was this very view that Jesus came into this world to subvert.

The spiritual author C. S. Lewis once wrote, in reflecting on how hard it is to pray for one's enemies as Christ commanded, that he had particular difficulty praying for people like Stalin or Hitler. This was because he had to come to terms with the fact that the very human failings that made them who they were are also present in each one of us. We can never be sure exactly how or why we are prevented from exercising that degree of evil and hatred; it is only through the grace and will of God that we don't. All the weakness and ignorance present in Peter today are present in all of us. We could not name one single baptized follower of Christ in whom these mortal failings were not or are not present. It is helpful for us to be alert about this, lest we follow in the way of Peter today and fail to realize that to follow Christ means following him to Jerusalem. It means actively taking up a cross, making our bodies a living sacrifice, as Paul says. It means examining the religious status quo of our day to make sure it is consistent with the sometimes harsh message of Jesus' good news. And it means making sure that we are more like last week's Peter, professing faith in Christ revealed to us by God, so we may continue to be strong and sturdy stones on which the church continues to be built.

KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

Matthew 16:21-27

E M D N I H E B T E G C E
 S U F F E R P F A J H S L
 E J P V I R Q P R I E J C
 S L B Q O V R K E B R Y A
 D F D F Q D E F I N E W T
 R G I E B J P R G A B T S
 Q T N R R R C T G T U E B
 D F S I I S E S G A K F O
 Y B W E K V G A G S E N V
 U A S L A N R E T E P V N
 X T P S I P I L O S E D K
 S Y J E L F Z H E K O I H
 Q M Y J R W E P T K Z L T

Find these words from the Gospel passage.

SAVE	ELDERS	THINKING
LIFE	SCRIBES	OBSTACLE
PETER	PROFIT	REBUKE
REPAY	SATAN	CHIEF PRIESTS
LOSE	SUFFER	GET BEHIND ME

Disciple's Reflection & Questions of the Week

*The Twenty-Second Sunday
in Ordinary Time
8/31/2008*

*Matthew 16:21-27
Faith-Sharing
Questions of the Week*



Our Lady of the Assumption

435 Berkeley Ave.
Claremont, CA
www.olaclaremont.org

Call to Prayer

We begin by calling upon God:

**In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

*We then pause for a moment to listen with
our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...*

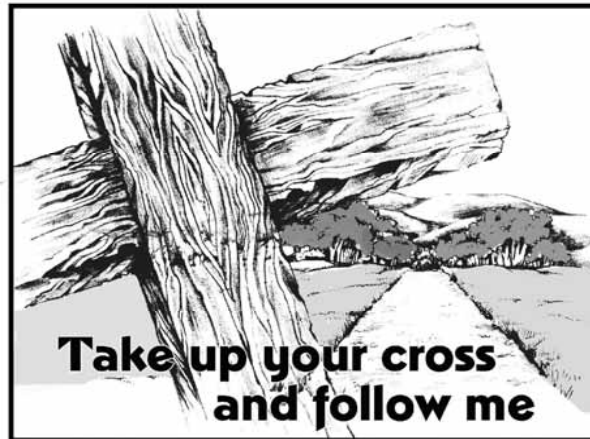
The Word of God: *Matthew 16:21-27*

The Gospel according to Matthew

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 not thinking 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."

The Gospel of the Lord



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Gospel Glossary

Jesus began: This phrase marks the beginning of a new emphasis in Matthew's gospel – that of Jesus' future suffering and death. This prediction of Christ's passion is the first of three in Matthew's gospel.

"Get behind me, Satan!": Peter's instinctive revulsion at the idea of Christ's suffering is seen here as a Satanic attempt to deflect Jesus from his appointed path. Christ's response echoes his rejection of temptation earlier in this gospel with the exclamation, "Get away, Satan!"

Deny himself: to deny something is to disown or dissociate oneself from it. To deny ourselves means to stop seeing ourselves as the center of our existence.

Jeremiah, the
"broken-hearted
prophet,"
as depicted by
Michelangelo



Faith Sharing

Questions of the Week

- When have I been like Peter, seeing suffering only in human terms?
- How is God calling me to take up my cross and deny myself?
- What does "the Father's glory" mean to me? How does it inspire me during times of suffering?

Closing Prayer

Almighty God,

Every good thing comes from you. Fill our hearts with love for you, increase our faith, and by your constant care, protect the good you have given us. Make us grateful stewards of all you have entrusted to us.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

**Twenty-Second Sunday
in Ordinary Time**