

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.'

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.'



Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

Here in our Australian democracy we
hardly feel the force of the famous
gospel passage in which Jesus
forewarns his disciples of the high cost
of following him. We trivialise the
meaning of taking up the cross to make
it refer to bearing a chronic ailment, or
putting up with a particularly irritating
family member or work colleague:
'It/he/she is the cross I have to bear.'

No, our Lord was referring to the terrible
reality which could be inflicted on his
followers, as even happens today: the
beheadings by ISIL in Iraq, the rape and
enslavement of women in Nigeria, the
displacement from homelands in Syria.
The True Cross is not to be found in
splinters of wood but in the various
means by which suffering is inflicted on
those whose allegiance to Jesus Christ
does not waiver.

Peter could not, would not, grasp this.
His head was full of political fantasy,
easy sovereignty. Jesus rebuked Peter
quite savagely: 'Satan, get behind me.'
Only after the resurrection, believing
that our Lord had conquered the worst
that death could do, did Peter follow
Jesus to crucifixion, upside down at the
base of the Vatican Hill.

We could take a moment to pray for and,
where possible, give appropriate political
support to, our fellow Christians
wherever they are persecuted, forced to
bear the true cross of suffering. May
God give those Christian martyrs victory
in the embrace of the resurrection
power of Jesus Christ.

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