



A COSTLY *Discipleship*

by Fr. Cesare Sposetti, SJ

“Get behind me, Satan!” We remember very well this rebuke, don’t we? It is almost incredible how Peter, from being the one who solemnly recognizes Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, on the way to Caesarea Philippi, ends up being rebuked as “Satan,” as somebody opposing the mission of the Son of Man. But what looks crucial is the first part of this rebuke: “Get behind me!” which means, “Come back, follow me!” Today’s readings reveal to us something profound concerning Jesus and our desire to follow him. He is the Christ indeed, and yet, he is the Son of God in a deeply different way from what we usually expect.

In the First Reading, we see the title taken from one of Isaiah’s songs of the “Suffering Servant.” Jesus has been identified with this mysterious character. He gave his

back to those beating him. He did not shield his face from buffets and spitting, setting his face like flint.

Following Christ is demanding. The discipleship has a “cost,” it is not a “cheap” grace, as German Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer used to say. To follow Christ means to tread the same path he has trodden, as today’s Gospel reminds us: “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” We are called to see that Jesus can appear to us as the Christ, as the Savior, only if we are able to look for him even in our wounds, in our sins and shortcomings. In other words, in our daily crosses which, with him, become the source of Life.

In the Letter of James (Second Reading), we are reminded that our Faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior, must always

be accompanied by our “works,” and particularly not only by taking up our own crosses but helping others (especially the poor and the needy) to carry theirs. This is what it means to follow Jesus and to recognize Him as the Messiah and the Savior.

Discipleship is not only on us: we are assured that we are not alone in this pilgrimage. As the First Reading reminds us, the Lord is near; the Lord is our help. He will never desert us in our personal way of the cross. As today we also celebrate Catechist’s Sunday, let us realize how important it is to help our brothers and sisters to grow this ability to see God not only in their joys and successes but also in their deepest wounds and failures. Only in this way shall we recognize Jesus as our true Savior and celebrate our Life in him even in our daily crosses.

PASTORAL CATECHESIS FOR THE YEAR OF *MISSIO AD GENTES*

Mission: A Gift to be Nourished

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

After the welcome ceremonies, the first stop of Pope Paul VI during his 1970 visit was the Manila Cathedral. He spoke affectionate words: “From the bottom of our heart we offer you the greetings exchanged by the followers of the same Jesus Christ. It is in His Name that we have come among you. It is to glorify and thank Him for the wonders accomplished in this part of Asia.”

“What a great joy it is for the Pope to see you all gathered here in this sacred place of prayer. Our first wish is to render

heartfelt homage to the generations of missionaries who, from the first beginnings, have built up this admirable Christian community of the Philippines, of which you, the priests and the religious of this land, are the finest witness.... Nor is it easy to appreciate fully the deep meaning of your lives, for they are not motivated by human interest, but illuminated by faith.”

“Take courage, dear sons and daughters. It is the Lord who has called you and who sends you out. It is his work that you are doing: ‘We are God’s fellow workers’ (cf. 2 Cor 6:1), you can say with Saint Paul. Therefore, be faithful to Jesus Christ. Nourish your gift of self at the inexhaustible fount of the Eucharist.”

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Sir 36:18)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you, that your prophets be found true. Hear the prayers of your servant, and of your people Israel.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—Knowing Jesus personally is the call and challenge of every Christian believer. If we are to accept Jesus as our Lord, we must accept his way of suffering as our own way of life. We must see Jesus not only in our glorious moments but above all in our pain and suffering. Following him involves commitment and determination. Only then can we truly prove ourselves to be his disciples.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

(Pause)

All—I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Look upon us, O God, Creator and ruler of all things, and, that we may feel the working of your mercy, grant that we may serve you with all our heart.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All — Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Is 50:5–9a) *(Sit)*

The prophet Isaiah presents to us the Suffering Servant of God. In his obedience and suffering, this mysterious figure is the embodiment of the Lord Jesus.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

THE Lord God opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.

The Lord God is my help,

therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame. He is near who upholds my right; if anyone wishes to oppose me, let us appear together. Who disputes my right? Let that man confront me. See, the Lord GOD is my help; who will prove me wrong?

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 116)

R—I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

E. C. Marfori

1. I love the LORD because he has heard/ my voice in supplication,/ because he has inclined his ear to me/ the day I called. **(R)**

2. The cords of death encompassed me;/ the snares of the netherworld seized upon me;/ I fell into distress and sorrow,/ and I called upon the name of the LORD,/ "O LORD, save my life!" **(R)**

3. Gracious is the LORD and just;/ yes, our God is merciful./ The LORD keeps the little ones;/ I was brought low, and he saved me. **(R)**

4. For he has freed my soul from death,/ my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling./ I shall walk before the LORD/ in the land of the living. **(R)**

Second Reading (Jas 2:14-18)

James writes that living faith must be authenticated with good works. It is not enough to wish someone well; we must attend to that person's need.

A reading from the Letter of Saint James

WHAT good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works." Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works.

—The word of the Lord.

All —Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Gal 6:14) (*Stand*)

All—Alleluia, alleluia. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mk 8:27–35)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Christ." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked

Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "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 and that of the gospel will save it."

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Profession of Faith (*Stand*)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (at the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—We now turn to our gracious Father that he may deepen our faith and strengthen our hope as we acknowledge his Son, Jesus, as our Messiah. With hearts full of confidence, we pray:

R—Lord, listen to the prayers of your people.

C—For the Holy Father, the bishops, the clergy, and all who exercise authority in the Church: May they continue to be living witnesses of Christ amidst all hardships and pastoral concerns. We pray: **(R)**

C—For all government officials: may they acknowledge Jesus as their model and inspiration that they may render honest administration and safeguard the dignity and rights of all. We pray: **(R)**

C—For all catechists: may they continue to dedicate their lives to the mission of Christ as teachers and witnesses. We lift to you all their hopes and needs. We pray: **(R)**

C—For the sick, the marginalized, victims of violence and injustice, and those persecuted because of their faith: may they acknowledge Christ as their sure hope and support as they go through pressing times. We pray: **(R)**

C—For all the faithful departed: may they enjoy peace and happiness in the presence of the living God. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P—Father, listen to the supplications of your faithful. Our needs are great and our troubles so many, but your love for us is far greater. Rescue us in our distress as we acknowledge Jesus, your Son who redeemed us, our true hope and lasting strength both now and forever. **All—Amen.**



Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—Look with favor on our supplications, O Lord, and in your kindness accept these, your servants' offerings, that what each has offered to the honor of your name may serve the salvation of all.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

Preface VIII

(Sundays in Ordinary Time)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For, when your children were scattered afar by sin, through the Blood of your Son and the power of the Spirit, you gathered them again to yourself, that a people, formed as one by the unity of the Trinity, made the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, might, to the praise of your manifold wisdom, be manifest as the Church.

And so, in company with the choirs of Angels, we praise you, and with joy we proclaim:
All—Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. *(Kneel)*

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.



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THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All — Our Father...

P — Deliver us, Lord...

All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion
(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(Cf. Ps 36 [35]:8)

How precious is your mercy, O God! The children of men seek shelter in the shadow of your wings.

Prayer after Communion
(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

May the working of this heavenly gift, O Lord, we pray, take possession of our minds and bodies, so that its effects, and not our own desires, may always prevail in us.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

May the God of all consolation order your days in his peace and grant you the gifts of his blessing.

All—Amen.

P—May he free you always from every distress and confirm your hearts in his love.

All—Amen.

P—So that on this life's journey you may be effective in good works, rich in the gifts of hope, faith and charity, and may come happily to eternal life.

All—Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Our celebration is ended. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All — Thanks be to God.