

THE 24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



THE GOSPEL [Mark 8:27-35](#)

*“But who do you say that I am?”*

Jesus,  
you ask us  
over and over,  
“Who do you say  
that I am?”

Show us who you are.

In every joy, take our hands.  
In every sorrow, take our hands.  
Then we will know you well,  
love you well.

Raising up your cross will not be so hard  
if you are there with us,  
holding our  
hands.

THE FIRST READING. [Isaiah 50:5-9a](#)

*He set his face like flint and gave his back to those who beat him.*

Christ  
so loved the world

that he set his face like flint and  
gave his back to those who beat him.

Oh  
Christ,  
you are love,  
which gets its meaning  
from you.

Set our  
faces  
too  
like flint,  
toward that love.

### THE SECOND READING. James 2:14-18

*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?*

O  
God,  
open our eyes,

as you did the eyes of the  
apostle James, of  
Vincent de Paul,  
of Dorothy  
Day.

Open our ears and  
let the cry of the poor come in all the way.

Anne Osdieck

### **REFLECTION:** *(From Sacred Space, Living Space)*

MARK'S GOSPEL throughout is describing a learning experience, first for the disciples of Jesus but also for the reader and hearer. Knowing who Jesus is and what following him means is something that the disciples did not tumble to all at once. It was a painful journey for them.

#### **Who do people say I am?**

Today's encounter of Jesus with his disciples at Caesarea represents a high point in Mark's gospel and in their relationship with Jesus.

It is a question of Jesus' identity. "Who do people say I am?" he asks them. They give various answers. The general opinion is that Jesus is certainly some kind of prophet sent by God. "But you, who do you say I am?" presses Jesus. "You," says Peter, speaking in the name of them all,

"you are the Christ." That is, you are the Messiah, the long-awaited liberator king of Israel.

### ***An exciting moment***

It must truly have been an exciting moment for the disciples. Their Master was no mere rabbi; he was the Messiah, the King of Israel! And they were part of his inner circle, his close friends and companions. And then – totally unexpected – comes the shock, Because Jesus begins to tell them what is going to happen to him, the Messiah. He will be rejected by the religious and civic leaders of his own people, he will undergo terrible sufferings, he will suffer a horrible and shameful death by execution on a cross, and at the end will rise on the third day (whatever that meant).

### ***An unacceptable scenario***

Peter protests to Jesus in the strongest terms. What Jesus was saying just did not make any sense. The reaction of Jesus is almost savage. "Get behind me, Satan! Yours are merely human thoughts; they do not represent God's way of seeing things." Peter – the Rock – is seen as a stumbling block. Jesus could be tempted to think like Peter. It would make a much more pleasant future than the one he had just described. But he knew this was the way he was being called to follow.

It is clear that the disciples' (and our) learning experience was not over. They had reached the critical stage of knowing who Jesus was – the Messiah. But now they had to discover – very painfully – just what kind of Messiah he was going to be. They won't know this and they will not see its terrible and compelling beauty until after the resurrection.

### ***More to come***

But Jesus is still not finished with them! Addressing his words not only to them but to everybody, Jesus continues: "If ANYONE wants to be my disciple, then he has to take his cross and come after me." Jesus' Way has also to be our way.

So much of the time we try to straddle the fences: be "good" Catholics and have the good things that everyone else wants as well. We don't want crosses. We even think that one of the purposes of prayer is to ask Jesus to take away the nasty things and make life smooth all the way.

But Jesus is urging us to let go. Our happiness, we need to learn, is not in having or grabbing, but in sharing what we have. It is in giving, not in getting. It is in letting go and letting God.