

22nd Sunday in ordinary Time

Jesus in the gospel reading of today tells his disciples that he will undergo humiliations, suffering and death at the hand of the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem and he will be raised from the dead on the third day.

Jesus must suffer because this what God in his wisdom has willed. And Jesus by accepting the suffering is demonstrating his obedience to God's will.

This prediction by Jesus of his suffering does not please Peter. So Peter says: **"God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you."**

After saying this Jesus calls Peter Satan and asks Peter to get behind him.

Peter who was praised and called blessed by Jesus in the last week's gospel reading in today's gospel reading is called Satan; the opposition because his words today are not the result of spiritual discernment.

Peter gives in to the human aversion to suffering. Every human being has aversion to suffering. Nobody wants to suffer. And we do not also want our loved ones to suffer.

Like Peter, we see Jeremiah in the first reading yielding to the human aversion to suffering. The grief and torture on him was so great that he directed his lament directly to God. He felt as if God deceived him when he called him to be his prophet.

He said, **"You duped me, O Lord and I let myself to be duped; you were too strong for me, and you triumphed."**

The point here is that Jeremiah like Jesus had to undergo the inevitable humiliations and suffering that his life as a prophet brought along.

We must do all that we can to avoid suffering. But we need to bear the inevitable suffering like sickness that life brings along.

Jesus in the gospel reading encourages us to bear the inevitable sufferings the practice of our Christian religion may bring on us. He asks us to take up our cross and follow him.

The cross, I will say, was an inevitable suffering Jesus had to undergo for our redemption. And as the followers of Jesus we also have our cross; our inevitable suffering to undergo in order to merit the salvation in Christ.

Jesus goes on to teach us in today's gospel reading that true life, the life lived in God which includes suffering is so precious that before it our most precious possessions are nothing.

He asks, **“What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeits his life?”**

St. Paul in the second reading tells us to live our lives as true Christians, that is, our daily lives must conform to the will of God. So if it is the will of God that we suffer let us offer it and our entire life as living sacrifice to him.

To conclude, I will like to say that suffering will always remain a lesson difficult to understand. We go on learning as we suffer. But what we should always remember is that God or Christ does not deceive us. So let us continue to cling fast to the Lord and surrender ourselves to God's grace and we will find peace.