

Thursday's Gospel: Supernatural Outlook

Gospel for Thursday in the 6th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 8:27-33*)

And Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do men say that I am?”

And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others one of the prophets.”

And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” And he charged them to tell no one about him.

And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men.”

Commentary

Jesus traveled great distances on foot with his disciples to bring the Gospel to everyone. In today's passage, we seem him 40 miles north of Capernaum, in Caesarea Philippi, a

city rich in foliage and water, which Herod founded in honor of Caesar Augustus and gave to his son Philip. It was when approaching this city and its surrounding villages that Jesus asks his disciples: “Who do men say that I am?”

After hearing some of the inadequate answers people had given, Peter is the only one who offers an answer in accord with the mystery of the Person of Jesus: “You are the Christ.” But Peter understands this truth in his own way and, deep down, he is as human in his judgments as the others. For when Jesus announces his future sufferings, Simon strongly objects.

Peter was so vehement in his misguided affection that he received a stern warning from Jesus: “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men” (v. 33).

To follow our Lord closely, we need supernatural outlook. That is, we need the ability to see things and people as God himself sees them. And this is not always easy. Above all, when it comes to accepting the Cross and its suffering as part of God's plans.

Saint Josemaría described supernatural outlook in this way: “Most people have a plane-like vision, stuck to the earth, of two dimensions. When you live a supernatural life, God will give you the third dimension: height, and with it, perspective, weight and volume” (*The Way*, 279).

When we put care into our prayer and habitual dialogue with our Lord, when we set aside fixed times to be alone with God, we acquire supernatural vision: our pupils dilate and our focus is enlarged. Our understanding of the world and

people is enriched with new perspectives and we capture unsuspected horizons: the horizons of God.

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