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Thursday's Gospel: The Truth of the Cross

Gospel for Thursday after Ash
Wednesday, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 9:22-25*)

And Jesus said: “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

And he said to all, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses

his life for my sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”

Commentary

Jesus drew close to everyone with love and compassion. He worked many miracles. He spoke like no one had ever spoken. He went out of his way for everyone to the point of not even knowing where he was going to rest his head at night. He forgave sins. He cast out demons. Jesus went into people's homes and invited himself to meals, even with publicans. He had deep and trusting conversations with the Pharisees who were willing to speak with him. And he fed the crowds if necessary. His personality must have been (and still is) very attractive. Jesus wanted

to call everyone a friend and showed affection to everyone: to the Galileans, the Jews of Judea, the Samaritans and foreigners.

But despite his great kindness, our Lord was rejected by some people. The elders, chief priests and scribes were guilty of Jesus' death, as he himself announces in today's Gospel passage. It was as though they were blind to our Lord's goodness. Today we continue to ask ourselves the same question that his disciples would have asked: How is it possible that some want to condemn Jesus, who is so good and kind, to the scaffold?

Surely the answer involves a number of reasons, which only God knows in full. But perhaps a sufficient reason is that the Master insisted on doing something else that does not always make friends for oneself: Jesus always spoke the truth. To do so is

certainly something very good, but the truth is not always something people find it pleasant to hear. Jesus, who was always faithful to his Father's mission, never remained silent. And that eloquent fidelity was what brought him to the Cross.

For Christians today, perhaps more than ever, taking up the Cross each day involves repeating the same truths Christ spoke and even with the same words. With no fear of life or of death. And to do so with the gift of tongues. With the help of Mary, who is always ready to assist us.

José María García Castro