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Friday's Gospel: "Who do the people say that I am"

Gospel for Friday in the 25th
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 9:18-21*)

Now it happened that as Jesus was praying alone the disciples were with him; and he asked them, "Who do the people say that I am?"

And they answered, "John the Baptist; but others say, Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets has risen." And he said to them, "But

who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

But he charged and commanded them to tell this to no one.

Commentary

Today's Gospel reading recounts that one day Jesus was alone with his disciples. And Jesus was praying, as was his custom. Those moments of prayer alongside the Master must have made a strong impression on the Apostles. Often this took place in the countryside. Jesus spoke with his Father without the noise of words, perhaps raising his eyes to heaven from time to time.

The only sound breaking the silence would have been the wind whispering through the pine trees,

and the distant bleating of sheep grazing on the hillside.

Meanwhile, the disciples would watch their Master closely, and try to imitate his recollected and serene countenance and accompany him in his prayer. Judas perhaps is distracted by his petty worries and waits restlessly for that time of prayer to end, while John is looking intently at his Lord. Peter is also sitting near Jesus and perhaps is praying about the great responsibility the Master has placed on him.

Suddenly, Jesus' warm voice breaks the silence and addresses an incisive question to his disciples, which also affects us: "Who do the people say that I am?"

Jesus' question breaks their recollection and leaves them thoughtful. Then each of them begins to tell the Master what they have

heard about Him and about his true identity.

When they finish, He asks them pointedly: “But who do you say that I am?” You, who are praying alongside me and have received much greater gifts than the others, “who do you say that I am?”

Peter’s resolute voice then intervenes, cutting off every other attempt to speak: “The Christ of God.”

Friendship with Jesus requires from us a similar resolute response, filled with a faith like Peter’s: “You are the Christ of God.” How useful is Saint Josemaría’s advice: “Stir up that fire of faith. Christ is not a figure that has passed. He is not a memory that is lost in history. He lives! ‘Jesus Christus heri et hodie, ipse et in saecula,’ says Saint Paul. ‘Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be for

ever’.” (*The Way*, no. 584). This trusting conviction forged in prayer will be so strong that it will change our words and our lives.

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