

Readings; Isaiah 50: 5-9; James 2: 14-18; Mark 8: 27-35



Fr Michael says:

Peter's Profession of Faith

At the start of part two of Mark's Gospel, we have the important scene of Peter's Profession of Faith, following on from Jesus' efforts to declare His Mission of Salvation through suffering, death and resurrection as being God's Plan for the Son of Man! The trials He experiences are reflected in the Third Poem of the Suffering Servant of God, who suffers because of His innocence. Jesus is seen as the Suffering Servant par excellence! As a result of Peter's declaration, Jesus then makes a triple disclosure: about the suffering he undergoes and the invitation for the disciples to join in it and the ultimate reality of glory through this suffering.

People who develop their faith through further reflection and study, to make it more personal, are able to move forward in faith in a more human and personal way. It is no longer enough to be born into faith; it is a second-hand one, handed on by parents. Each generation needs to be "born again" as the Americans tend to put it. Otherwise we can have many who are tired of living their faith, come late or leave early from Mass: how many sad faces do we see around us as we share in Mass??

Jesus' questions are vital: "Who do people say I am?" We find that people are off the mark generally and this leads to the more personal: "Who do YOU say I am?" It is THE question posed by the whole Gospel of Mark! Peter's answer is critical: It hits him like a lightning bolt - "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!" This goes to the very heart of our Faith, as it is the foundation of Church. Each of us is called to answer this question personally, to be clear what are our values and beliefs. "Official" answers are not enough! We need our OWN faith to walk our way of faith, increasing belief leads to greater personal conviction, based on the Rock who is Christ. 'We cannot keep to ourselves the words of eternal life given to us in our encounter with Jesus Christ: they are meant for everyone. It is our responsibility to pass on what, by God's grace, we ourselves have received.' *Pope Benedict, Verbum Domini 91*

Peter gave his answer, but he was not fully aware of what that meant, he had to grow into it to realise the full richness of Jesus' message. He made the perfect act of faith, but ended up denying he even knew Jesus! We need God's grace, not only to profess it, but to live it!

"A faith which doesn't result in good works is dead, the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love; the fruit of love is service and the fruit of service is peace!" May that be reality for us on this Home Mission Sunday, when we are called to Proclaim our faith in word and deed to others!