



The profession of Peter
"who do you say that I am?"

Luke 9,18-24

1. Opening Prayer

“O Holy Spirit, you who unite my soul to God: move it with ardent desires and enkindle it with the fire of your love. How good you are with me, O Holy Spirit of God: may you be praised and blessed for the great love that you pour out upon me! My God and my Creator, is it ever possible that there would be someone who would not love you? For so long I have not loved you! Forgive me, Lord. O Holy Spirit, grant that my soul may be completely God’s, and that I may serve Him without any personal interest, but only because He is my Father and because He loves me. My God and my all, is there perhaps any other thing that I could possibly desire? Only You would satisfy me. Amen.”
(St. Teresa of Jesus)

2. Gospel Reading - Luke 9,18-24

Once when Jesus was praying in solitude, and the disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, 'One of the ancient prophets has arisen.'" Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said in reply, "The Messiah of God." He rebuked them and directed them not to tell this to anyone. He said, "The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised." Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

3. A moment of prayerful silence

so that the Word of God may penetrate and enlighten our life.

4. Some Questions

- We all believe in Jesus. But there are some who understand him in one way and others in another way. Today, which is the more common Jesus in the way of thinking of people?
- How does propaganda interfere in my way of seeing Jesus? What do I do so as not to

allow myself to be drawn by the propaganda? What prevents us today from recognizing and assuming the project of Jesus?

- We are waiting for the messiah, each in our own way. What is the messiah that I look for and expect for?
- The requirement to follow Jesus is the cross. How do I react with the cross of my life?

5. For those who wish to go deeper into the theme

- The Gospel today follows the same theme as that of the previous verses: the opinion of the people on Jesus. The previous verses of chapter 9, beginning with Herod, today it is Jesus who asks what do people think, the public opinion and the Apostles respond giving the same opinion which was given yesterday. Immediately follows the first announcement of the Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus.

- Luke 9, 18: The question of Jesus after his prayer. "One day, while Jesus was praying alone, his disciples came to him and he put this question to them: "Who do the crowds say I am?" In Luke's Gospel, on several important and decisive occasions, Jesus is presented in prayer: in his Baptism when he assumes his mission (Lk 3, 21); in the 40 days in the desert, when, he overcame the temptations presented by the devil Lk 4, 1-13); the night before choosing the twelve apostles (Lk 6, 12); in the Transfiguration, when, with Moses and Elijah he spoke about his passion in Jerusalem (Lc 9, 29); in the Garden when he suffers his agony (Lk 22, 39-46); on the Cross, when he asks pardon for the soldier (Lk 23, 34) and when he commits his spirit to God (Lk 23, 46).

- Luke 9, 19: The opinion of the people on Jesus. "They answered: "For some John the Baptist; others Elijah, but others think that you are one of the ancient prophets who has risen from the dead". Like Herod, many thought that John the Baptist had risen in Jesus. It was a common belief that the prophet Elijah had to return (Mt 17, 10-13; Mk 9, 11-12; Mt 3, 23-24; Eccl 48, 10). And all nourished the hope of the coming of the Prophet promised by Moses (Dt 18,15). This was an insufficient response.

- Luke 9, 20: The question of Jesus to the disciples. After having heard the opinion of others, Jesus asks: "And you, who do you say I am?" Peter answers: "The Messiah of God!" Peter recognizes that Jesus is the one whom the people are waiting for and that he comes to fulfil the promise. Luke omits the reaction of Peter who tries to dissuade Jesus to follow the way of the cross and omits also the harsh criticism of Jesus to Peter (Mk 8, 32-33; Mt 16, 22-23).

- Luke 9, 21: The prohibition to reveal that Jesus is the Messiah of God. "Then Jesus gave them strict orders and charged them not to say this to anyone". It was forbidden to them to reveal to the people that Jesus is the Messiah of God. Why does Jesus prohibit this? At that time, as we have already seen, everybody was expecting the coming of the Messiah, but, each one in his own way: some expected a king, others a priest, others a doctor, a warrior, a judge or a prophet! Nobody seemed to expect the Messiah Servant, announced by Isaiah (Is 42, 1-9). Anyone who insists in maintaining Peter's idea, that is, of a glorious Messiah, without the cross, understands nothing and will never be able to assume the attitude of a true disciple. He will continue to be blind, exchanging people for trees (cf. Mk 8, 24). Because without the cross it is impossible to understand who Jesus

is and what it means to follow Jesus. Because of this, Jesus insists again on the Cross and makes the second announcement of his passion, death and resurrection.

• Luke 9:22-24: Following Jesus. ‘Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.’” The full understanding of the following of Jesus is not obtained through theoretical instruction, but through practical commitment, walking with him along the way of service, from Galilee to Jerusalem. The way of following is the way of self-giving, of abandonment, of service, of availability, of acceptance of conflict, knowing that there will be resurrection. The cross is not an incidental event, but is rather part of this way, because in a world organized on selfish principles, love and service can only exist as crucified! He or she who makes of his or her life a service to others, disturbs those who live grasping at privileges, and suffers...

6. Prayer: Psalm 1

Happy those who do not follow the counsel of the wicked,
Nor go the way of sinners, nor sit in company with scoffers.
Rather, the law of the LORD is their joy;
God's law they study day and night.
They are like a tree planted near streams of water,
that yields its fruit in season;
Its leaves never wither;
whatever they do prospers.
But not the wicked!
They are like chaff driven by the wind.
Therefore the wicked will not survive judgment,
nor will sinners in the assembly of the just.
The LORD watches over the way of the just,
but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

7. Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for your word that we can see better the will of the Father. May your Spirit enlighten our actions and grant us the strength to follow your Word that revealed to us. Make us, like Mary, your mother, not only to listen but also to practice the Word. You who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.