Can Christ Count on Me?

Daily Gospel / Liturgycal Cycle C

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Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Mark 8: 27-33.
Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Christ." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him. He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

Mark 8:27-33

Introductory Prayer:
Lord, reveal the awesome mystery of your person. In you is hidden my beginning; in you is hidden the mission of my life; in you is hidden my future happiness. Let me not measure the future by what I think I can do for you, but rather by what your power can do with my generosity. May this prayer convince me of the necessity of welcoming receiving you daily through prayer, contemplation, and a sacramental life of grace and conversion.

Petition:
Lord, grant me an experience of you strong enough to overcome all spiritual laziness and tepidity, so that I faithfully fulfill all of my spiritual commitments.

1. Who Has Christ Been for You?
Our prayer must lead us to respond to Christ's question, "Who do you say that I am?" This is the only test, the only examination question we need to pass in life. We must reflect and respond to the question from this perspective: "Who has Christ been for you?" This question does not so much define Christ, but the one who answers it. What experiences have we had of him? What have we been learning about Christ personally, through experiences that we cannot have known by solemn definitions, by routine external piety, or by what others say? Christ's history and our personal history must intertwine to become a single chapter which we both share.

2. Who Have You Been for Christ?
If I have little to say as far as my firsthand knowledge of Jesus, if my interior experiences have been eclipsed by a mundane and materialistic spirit, I must take Christ's question to the next level: "Who have I been for Christ?" Who I have been for Christ will be determined largely by who I have been for him in prayer. The "inner Christ" is known only by those to whom it is revealed. It will not happen by a merely flesh-and-blood approach, nor by just going with the flow of human events. Peter's interior life was fertile ground for the Father, his testimony was not luck, but was a divine intervention in his soul from which his faith drew its strength. "For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). May I seek in a special way the grace of greater sensitivity to let my interior life of prayer define me and shape my character.

3. Can Christ Count on Me?
Poor Peter! In one moment he is revealing the thoughts of the Father, in the next, Satan's. Peter's living experience of Christ is the target of Satan's attempts to break his faith. Christ's suffering will be the pledge that the faith of the apostle will not fail: "I have prayed for you..." (Luke 22:32). Ultimately Christ's prayer would prevail: Peter is reborn on Pentecost, fearlessly accepting and launching the mission of the Church. A strong interior foundation in Christ ultimately leads to one last reality check of the spiritual life: Can Christ build on me because I am built on him? Christ's fidelity will uphold me if I stay in the battle, if I hold firm and don't let the reality of my falls keep me from advancing. Satan cannot break my faith if I keep fighting, and for this I always have to have new goals, to begin fresher, better, and more generously than before.

Conversation with Christ:
Adapting the words of St. Paul from Ephesians 3:16-20, I make his prayer my own: I pray the Lord, according to the glory, you may grant that I may may be strengthened in my inner being with power through your Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith, as I am being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that I may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that I may be filled with all the fullness of you. Now to you who by the power at work within me is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all I can ask or imagine, be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Cf. Ephesians 3:16-20)

Resolution:
I will spend time with our Lord in the Eucharist today, and ask him to increase the experience of him.