The Mistaken Messiah

Daily Gospel / Liturgycal Cycle C

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Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 9: 18-22.
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 Christ 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."

Luke 9:18-22.
Introductory Prayer:
Lord, you are the author of life and the giver of all that is good. You are the Prince of Peace and my mainstay. You are my healer and the cure itself. I need you, and I need to give you. I love you and commit myself to you entirely, knowing you could never let me down or deceive me. Thank you for giving me your very self.

Petition:
Lord Jesus, grant me the courage to bear witness to you as the Messiah.

1. "According to the Latest Poll":
Frequently we hear in the news opinion polls concerning certain topics, people or events. There is nothing novel about that. But when Christ himself polls popular opinion by asking, "Who do the crowds say that I am?", he isn't interested in his public rating. If this were his motive he would have become very discouraged, because the public opinion was so far from the truth. "What do you mean, John the Baptist?" there is quite a difference between the bridegroom and the best man at the wedding feast. Other is opinions stray even farther. What matters in life is not what others think or say about us. The only opinion that matters is God's: what he thinks about us and what we do. Lord, not everyone knows you. We live in a generation that seeks more signs. Send us your gift of faith so that we might truly believe and thus be saved.

2. Personal Convictions:
Jesus had three short years to shed his blood for our redemption and found his Church. In founding the Church he had to transform some rough fishermen. He had to bring them to believe firmly his divinity and mission so that they would continue the work of salvation after his death. Jesus had just spent some time in prayer, and he knew from where the transformation would come. Just how much had his disciples managed to open their hearts to the Father's work? "Who do you say that I am?" Peter rises to the occasion. He couldn't have said it more concisely and exactly: "The Messiah of God. "How about me? Who is Jesus for me? Is he truly my Messiah and Redeemer? Do I preach this truth to others by the way I live and the words I speak? I want to be a more ardent apostle of your Kingdom, Lord. Give me convincing words and actions so that others might come to recognize you as the Messiah of God.

3. The Pharisees Got It Wrong:
So that there would be no mistake as to the meaning of Peter's confession of faith, Jesus decided to define the term. Messiah means "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." The Pharisees misunderstood the figure of the Messiah. They thought the Messiah would deliver them from Roman occupation. They had not understood that slavery to Rome was nothing in comparison to the slavery to sin and to the prince of this world." If we are to conquer sin and Satan today, there is only one way: the cross. Jesus is the savior of the world. Through his passion and death he has become the solution to all of our problems. This is why he tells us: "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me"(Luke 9:23).

Conversation with Christ:
Lord, I fear that cross with every fiber of my being, but let your will and not mine be done. I know that if you are with me, everything will work out in the end. I want to be a better apostle of your kingdom.

Resolution:
Despite the opposition I may encounter, I will try to make every encounter with others today an occasion to share my faith with them and bring them closer to God.