

24th Ordinary Sunday

Readings 50:4-9; James 2:14-18; Mark 8:27-35

A story is told that a Roman official assigned the task of filling in Jesus' death certificate. The death certificate appeared like this:

DEATH CERTIFICATE

NAME_____	Height_____	Age_____
Aliases_____	Eye Color_____	Sex_____
Father's Name_____	Mother's name_____	
City of birth_____	Occupation_____	
Permanent Address_____		
Properties owned at time of death_____		
Crime committed_____		
Cause of death_____		
Date/time of death_____		
Burial details_____		



Answering the above certificate helps us appreciate how little we know about the external details of Jesus life: What did Jesus look like? How, exactly, did he spend the first thirty years of his life? How did he talk, walk and laugh? These and countless other similar details re not given to us in the gospels.

Our Lord once again asks His disciples of who the people say He is. There are so many answers given like John the Baptist, Elijah and other prophets. But when Jesus asks them of who is to them. Peter answered that He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, (v. 29).

Sometimes we react like St. Peter in our understanding of who God is. Who is God to us? For many of us we think that our God is a God of comfort and of welfare; that our God is the One who gives us happiness and growth in our way of living. God is good if our life is good. That is why we don't want a God of misery. If we feel something bad of our lives, our view of God will become different. But let us remember that our God is not only a God of comfort and welfare, He is also a God of misery, trials and difficulties. If our God undergoes difficulties and miserable life, then we should also bear trials and difficulties in our lives. We should know how to carry our cross of pain, suffering, trials and difficulties.

Sometimes in the year 2010, I celebrated a funeral Mass to a friend of mine who died giving birth to her third child, a baby girl. Her first child was a 12-year old little girl as well as her second child a 7-year old girl. When I delivered my homily, no words came out from my mouth as I looked at the father with his three daughters. It is because they are a happy family and suddenly the wife has gone ahead of them. So I did not deliver a homily but I told the congregation to reflect for a few moments.

After the Mass I talked to the father and he told me that he didn't know what God wants from him and his family, why this happened. And I told him: "Maybe today you don't understand what God wants from you but maybe in some other days, you will."

Just recently I visited the father and I found out that his eldest daughter already finished her college studies, have a good job and very active in the singles for Christ. His second daughter is still in college but also very active in the youth ministry of the parish. His third daughter is still in Grade VI but one of the altar servers of the parish. The father did not remarry but focus on her three children and he is the lay cooperator. And he told me: "Now I understand what God wants from me and my family. He wants us to be His instruments of spreading the good news to other people."

Jesus in today's gospel gives the condition of discipleship: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me," (v. 34). How do we accept, pains, sufferings and difficulties that come in our way? Let us remember that we should not separate the cross from Christ because that is the only way of making our pain and suffering bearable and meaningful.

What a wonderful application of the words of Jesus about carrying our cross daily, that is, carry it with love. We can apply this carrying of our cross with love to people whom we consider as our crosses in our lives. And we will see changes that will make in any of our relationships.

At the end, it is good to ask the Lord also this question: "Who I am to you, Lord?" Because it is only by knowing who we really are that we can move forward in our spiritual life. The Lord's answer would be that we are sinners, He alone is the Holy One and we should never forget this. But Jesus assures us that every time we commit sin the Lord said that it is not our sin that is repeated. It is His mercy that is repeated. Amen.

Inspirational quotes: "All those who belong to Jesus Christ are fastened with Him to the cross." ~St. [Augustine](#)

The cross shows the seriousness of our sin—but it also shows us the immeasurable love of God." . Billy Graham