

**TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
YEAR C. JUNE 23, 2013**

**Theme: Would he rebuke us?**

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*(Taking a microphone among the congregation)*

As he asked his first disciples, who do you say that Jesus of Nazareth is?

*(Ask six or eight people in different parts of the church.)*

When Jesus asked that same question of his first disciples, as we heard in the Gospel today, upon hearing Peter's response on behalf of them all -- **"You are the Christ of God"** -- Jesus rebuked them.

He rebuked them! That is, he reprimanded them; he sharply criticized them.

What would he say to our descriptions of who he is?

Would he rebuke us?

Would he be upset with our responses as he was with theirs? And why?

Immediately after noting Jesus' upset, Luke's Gospel gives us this teaching:

**"The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected...and be killed and on the third day be raised."**

Jesus apparently felt strongly -- else why the "rebuke"? -- that titles like "Messiah of God" and "Son of God" did not sufficiently convey the suffering, rejection and death that were about to be part of his life and ministry.

Such titles were too pretty, too safe, and in fact inaccurate.

But perhaps more importantly is the second part of today's teaching:

**"If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself 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."**

Even more important than misunderstanding who he is, Jesus was concerned that the grand and glorious titles would give the disciples a wrongheaded idea of who they were.

Both he and they, because they follow him, were destined to suffer and be rejected for what they believed in, what they stood for.

I'm guessing the only answer Peter might have gotten away without a rebuke from Jesus might have been **"You are the Crucified One and the one who will rise."**

For us he is the **"Crucified and Risen One."**

And we are disciples of the **"Crucified and Risen One."**

As such we take up the cross daily, that is, it is our way of life, and follow him.

We take up the cross to visit and care for the sick, the lonely, the hurting as he did.

We take up the cross as many of our sisters and brothers from Catholic Charities and Bread for the World did this week to defend the hungry as some in congress seek to strip billions of dollars from the former food stamp program.

We take up the cross as we struggle to hold on to our ethical vales and moral principles in our work places.

We take up the cross daily as we cope with illnesses and the effects of aging, not with constant complaints but with as much joy and serenity as we can muster.

For we are disciples of the **"Crucified and Risen One."**

And on those days when bending down to pick up and carry the cross seems too much, just remember the rest of his words:

**"Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."**