



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

# Family Faith Focus

Volume 10, Issue 7

September 12, 2021

## Dates to Remember

- Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
September 11: 4:00 PM Mass  
September 12: 9:00 AM Mass
- September 13: Memorial of St. John Chrysostom
- September 14: Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- September 15: Memorial Our Lady of Sorrows
- September 16: Memorial of St. Cornelius & St. Cyprian
- September 17: Memorial of St. Robert Bellarmine

## Food for Thought

"If we wish to learn the art of living well and dying well, let us not follow the crowd, which only believes and values what is seen. Instead let us follow Christ."

—St. Robert Bellarmine

St. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) entered the newly formed Society of Jesus in 1560 and was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1570. He was a scholar and theologian who devoted his life to the study of Scripture and Catholic doctrine. His writings focused on the person of Jesus as the source of faith and not just adherence to a set of doctrines.

Robert Bellarmine was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1930 and named a Doctor of the Church the following year. He is the patron of catechists and catechumens. His feast day is September 17.

## Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Mark 8: 27-35**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

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.

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

*"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. Because, by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world."*

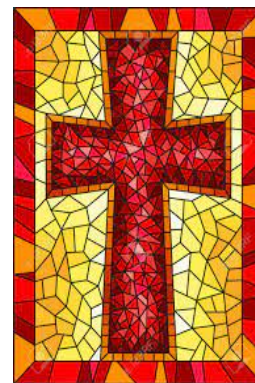
For Catholics and for all Christians, the cross is both the symbol of Christ's suffering and death, and the sign of his triumph over death and promise everlasting life.

The great paradox of the cross, is that although we look to the cross in times of suffering, knowing the cross symbolizes the agonizing and cruel death that Christ suffered, we also exalt or lift up the cross in celebration of Christ's victory over sin and death.

On September 14, the Church celebrates the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. We celebrate the glory of the cross on this feast day, the great sign of God's love and presence in our lives. The cross is the banner of our salvation and redemption and the promise of what is to come for all who believe, eternal life with God.

Each time we make the Sign of the Cross, we are reminded that baptized into the life of Christ, and through the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we belong to God as his holy and beloved children.

Let us follow the way of the cross as disciples of Jesus, finding strength and encouragement in times of difficulty or struggle, but also lifted up in the joy of being united to the victory of Christ through his death and resurrection. The cross is the sign of the fullness of life that is ours in Christ.



## Sunday Gospel Connection: September 12, 2021

### Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B

### Mark 8: 27-35

**Gospel Background:** Today's reading is the turning point in Mark's Gospel. In the presentation of the life and ministry of Jesus found in the Gospel of Mark, the deeds of Jesus have shown Jesus to be the Son of God. Yet many, including Jesus' disciples, have not yet realized his identity. In today's Gospel, Jesus asks the disciples for a field report by asking what others say about him. He then turns the question directly to the disciples and asks what they believe. Peter speaks for all of them when he announces that they believe Jesus to be the Christ.



The word *Christ* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word for Messiah, which means “the anointed one.” At the time of Jesus, the image of the Messiah was laden with popular expectations, most of which looked for a political leader who would free the Jewish people from Roman occupation. Jesus does not appear to have used this term for himself. As we see in today's reading, Jesus refers to himself instead as the Son of Man, a term derived from the Jewish Scriptures, found in the Book of Daniel and in other apocryphal writings. Many scholars suggest that the phrase Son of Man is best understood to mean “human being.”

Now that the disciples have acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, Jesus confides in them the outcome of his ministry: he will be rejected, must suffer and die, and will rise after three days. Peter rejects this prediction, and Jesus rebukes him severely. The image of Christ that Jesus is giving is not the image of the Messiah that Peter was expecting. Jesus then teaches the crowd and the disciples about the path of discipleship: To be Christ's disciple is to follow in the way of the cross.

We can easily miss the fear that Jesus' words must have evoked in his disciples. Death by crucifixion was all too familiar as a method of execution in Roman-occupied territories. It was also an omnipresent danger to the Christian community for whom Mark wrote. The path that Jesus was inviting his disciples to share meant tremendous suffering and death. This is the kind of radical commitment and sacrifice that Jesus calls us to adopt for the sake of the Gospel.

**Family Connection:** Peter had expectations about what it meant to call Jesus the Messiah, the Christ. Jesus was indeed the Messiah, but his life and death would show a different understanding of what it means to be the Messiah. We, too, have expectations of God and our own ideas about what we think God ought to be doing in our world. Like Peter, however, we may risk limiting our image of God by thinking only in human ways. God's plan is always more that we can ever imagine.

As you gather as a family, talk about what we expect God to be doing in our world and in our family life. Then read today's Gospel, Mark 8:27-35. Why do you think Peter was so upset by what Jesus was saying? Notice how Jesus reprimands Peter. Do we sometimes forget to let God be God for us? That is, do we sometimes get discouraged because God doesn't act in our world in the ways that we expect? Pray together that we will remember that God is always working for the world's salvation in ways that are beyond our imagination. Conclude by praying together today's psalm, Psalm 116.

For more information and Sunday Connection resources visit:

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