

HOMILY XXII SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

GET BEHIND ME!

My dear brothers and sisters.... Last week, we left Peter at one of the most important moments in his journey with Jesus...

Do you remember? Jesus had asked His disciples... Who do you say that I am? And Peter answered... You are the Christ, he Son of the living God... And Jesus called him blessed... He called him Peter... **The rock!**

And today's Gospel begins exactly where we left off last Sunday... but things change very quickly... After Jesus tells His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem...

That there, He will suffer...

That He will be rejected...

That He will die... and

That He will rise again...

The same Peter who has just recognized who Jesus is, and who has just been named the rock on which the Church will be built... **is now called by Jesus a stumbling block...** Nevertheless, Peter hasn't stopped believing in Jesus... he hasn't stopped loving Him...

What Peter still needs to learn is that **it's not enough to recognize who Jesus is...** he also, **has to learn to follow Him along the path that Jesus shows him...** Peter accepts the Messiah... **but he still wants a Messiah according to his own idea...**

And it's exactly here, that Peter's experience begins to look like our own... Because

We too can believe...

We can love the Lord...

We can pray...

We can sincerely give our lives to Him...

And yet, when God's path isn't the path, we had imagined, we too can begin to say...

No, Lord... not that way...

HOMILY XXII SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

GET BEHIND ME!

We want to follow Jesus... but sometimes we want to decide the path ourselves, and that is why Jesus' answer to Peter is so strong... **Get behind me...** Peter had placed himself in front...

He wanted to tell Jesus where He should go... what should happen... what path He should avoid...

And Jesus places him once again where a disciple belongs... **Behind the Master...** As if He were saying... ***Peter, you already know who I am... Now you need to learn how to follow me...***

Last Sunday, Peter learned to say who Jesus is... today he begins to learn what it means **to follow Him!**

And then, Jesus extends the call to follow Him to all His disciples... **If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me...**

But Jesus, isn't inviting us, my dear friends, to look for suffering... He isn't telling us **that the cross is good simply because it hurts...**

But He does remind us, that following Him **means trusting Him even when the path takes us to places, we wouldn't have chosen...** It means **remaining behind the Master...** even when we still don't fully understand where He is leading us...

That is why today's first reading is so fitting...

Jeremiah had also answered God... He had also accepted a call...

But there comes a point, when that mission begins to weigh on him... He has experienced **rejection... mockery... exhaustion...** And he decides...**I will not speak in His name anymore...**

Jeremiah is ready to give up... But then he discovers something inside him... **There was in my heart something like a burning fire... I tried to hold it in, but I could not...**

Jeremiah discovers that even though the path has become difficult, God has already lit something inside him that he simply cannot put out...

There comes a point in our journey with God when we discover that it's no longer simply about fulfilling an obligation...

We've tasted His presence...

We've heard His voice...

We've experienced His love...

And a thirst appears that nothing else can satisfy... **That is why we keep following Him!**

Not because it's always easy...

Not because we understand everything...

Not because we're never afraid or never feel like running away...

We follow Him because we've found Someone without whom our hearts no longer know how to live... even when, sometimes, **He has to correct us**... Jesus corrects Peter with very strong words... **But He doesn't abandon Him**... Peter continues to be Peter...

He continues to be a disciple...

He continues to walk with Jesus...

He will still make many mistakes...

He will have to learn...

He will have to fall...

He will have to cry...

He will experience denial, **and also forgiveness**...

He will need time to truly understand what Jesus is trying to teach him today...

But the day will come when the same Peter who today says... Lord, this must never happen to you... **will also be able to give his own life for Christ**...

My dear friends... The answer of faith can be given in a moment... **But learning to live that answer can take a lifetime...**

Perhaps at some point we too have said to the Lord... **You're the Christ!**

Perhaps at some point we've said to Him... **Yes, Lord... I want to follow You!**

But that yes needs to keep growing... it needs to become deeper... freer... **more trusting!** So that

When the moment comes when we don't understand...

When our path isn't exactly what we had imagined...

When we too feel the temptation to step in front and say... **No, Lord... not that way...**

Let us remember once again the words of Jesus... **Get behind me...** Return to the place of the disciple... **Trust again, and follow me!** Let us not be afraid when we find ourselves feeling like Peter... and in this way, may we experience God's mercy and love each day.

Fr. Moices Rafael C.