

TRINITY NEWS

Making the Mission of God Known

Our Gospel today, Matt. 16:21-28 talks about the point in Jesus ministry when he began telling his disciples about his mission. It happened after much of his public ministry around Galilee (4:17-16:20) and now he has entered fresh start or a new phase in the ministry; it is seen by the phrase that says, “From that time..(NRSV)” or “From then on.. (NIV)” which appears both in 4:17 and 16:21. These narratives are connected based on their focus in the progressing redemptive work of Jesus.

The first block, starting on 4:17, the time he started preaching similar to that John the Baptist, asking for a decisive response from the people, to repent in preparation to the new situation- the arrival of the Kingdom of God. As a result there was insistence in the crowd to the question, “who is this?” Who is this who does miraculous healings, sign and wonders? This culminates in chapter 16:16 Jesus is the Messiah or the Christ, the Son of the living God”. Now in chapter 16 verse 21, Jesus teaching again enters a new phase. It is focused not anymore on who the Christ is but what the Christ will do. Jesus began to reveal this to his private crowd, his disciples, the true nature of his messianic mission –it is one of suffering, and rejection and death, in which they are to follow him.

Christians today face good and bad news. The good news- we have the whole story and can learn from the event and the experiences of characters in the story. What stands out are three things: first Jesus, the Messiah’s revelation of his own suffering, rejection and death; second, Peter “the rock on which Jesus will build his church” opposition to Jesus’ disclosure which earned him a strong reprimand; and thirdly, the teaching that the same fate awaits those who desire to come after Jesus and follow him.

The first two were addressed by history, Jesus’ prophecy about himself fulfilled and Peter made three more serious blunder in the process, the Roman church acknowledge him as its founder. But the last one remains a great challenge ever since- “If anyone desires to come after me, let him

deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"- it's the real deal. People are converted to Christianity in a few minutes of Bible sharing but to "take up one's cross" in following Jesus involves a lifetime. It seems the cross of Christ, which is self denial to make him known have little bearing on people lives today. Before its placing your head on the chopping board or firing line for the cause of the Gospel but times have change. In the Christian circle, we have much of Jesus Christ *as savior* and less of Jesus Christ *as Lord*. We can say that cross means to put the Mission of God (*Missio Dei*) in the center of lives. Our personal purpose statement in life should be, what is my response to the call of Jesus to "..pick up your cross and follow me?".. it may take more than being 'saved', it is recognizing that God calls us in any field of involvement to make Him known in any way we can.

Fr. Melvin Bautista

THIS WEEK:

Wednesday, September 3.

- *Bible study, 10:00am*

NEXT WEEK:

September 7.

- *YOUTH SUNDAY*
- *Sunday School starts.*

Readings:

- *Ezekiel 33:7-11*
- *Psalms 119*
- *Romans 12:9-21*
- *Matthew 18:15-20*