

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Word of God this Sunday is a hard Word, a Word that cuts. Jesus begins to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer greatly, be killed, and on the third day be raised. And when Peter, with the same flesh that we all carry, tries to pull Him away from the Cross by saying, “God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to You!” Jesus turns and says with force, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

Then He announces the kerygma of the disciple: **“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 will find it.”**

This is the Good News! Not a soft gospel that adapts itself to the world, but the announcement that Christ has died and is risen, and that we are called to die with Him in order to rise with Him. St. Paul cries out the same truth today: “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” And Jeremiah, the prophet who felt the fire of the Word burning in his bones, shows us what it costs to carry this announcement when the world mocks and rejects it.

The Cross is not an accident. It is the place where the love of the Father is revealed. The world offers us a life without the Cross: comfort, success, self-preservation. But the Lord says, if you try to save that life, you will lose it. Only the one who loses his life for Christ and for the Gospel will find the true life, the life of the Resurrection.

Brothers and sisters, this Word is spoken to us today, in our parish, in our families, in the concrete situations of our life. What is the Cross that the Lord is asking you to take up? In the forgiveness you refuse to give? In the fidelity that the world ridicules? In the daily sacrifice of living as a Christian in a secular age? In remaining in the parish community even when it is difficult?

The Christian life is not an idea or a morality: it is a journey of conversion. We learn to carry one another's crosses, to announce to one another the victory of the Risen One, and to become a sign for the far-away.

Let us not be like Peter before the Passion, wanting a Messiah without the Cross. Let us allow the Holy Spirit to place us behind Jesus, following Him. **For only by dying with Him will we taste the joy of the Resurrection.**

Christ is risen! He is truly risen! And He walks with us.

Peace,

