

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

Our Lord ends today's Gospel reading with a very difficult word:

**“For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of Him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mk 8:38).**

So, are you ashamed of Jesus?

Most of you are thinking,  
“well, of course not!”  
And that's good.

But for what it's worth, St. Peter was ashamed of Jesus.

Don't get me wrong, Peter loved Jesus.  
He was with Him night and day,  
walking miles on end,  
chewing on every word that fell from His mouth,  
and knowing that *man does not live on bread alone.*

But on this particular day, the same day in fact that Peter confessed boldly that Jesus is *the Christ*,  
Jesus defined what sort of Christ He would be:

**“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must  
suffer many things  
and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes  
and be killed,  
and after three days rise again.” (8:31)**

But that's not the sort of Christ Peter signed up for.  
He was ashamed of *that* sort of Jesus.

But why? Why would Peter be ashamed of this?

Simple. Because it was weak.  
That's no way to be Lord, or king, or Christ.  
No, you must be strong and powerful,  
you've got to be cutting edge and visionary,  
not suffering, being rejected, and dying!

Peter was ashamed at the weakness of this Christ.  
And he wouldn't have it.

So after Jesus finished teaching the disciples about this embarrassing weakness,  
Peter pulled him aside and began to rebuke Him.

That's right, *Peter rebuked Jesus*.

He was ashamed at the sort of *Christ*, Jesus had in mind to be.  
And so he told Jesus, "No."

Now Jesus saw this as another teaching moment.  
And it wouldn't be good enough for just Peter to hear—  
the text says, "**But turning and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter**" (8:33).  
That is, Jesus made sure the others were watching and listening in.  
While Peter pulled Jesus aside privately, Jesus included the others and said,  
**"Get behind Me, Satan!**  
**For you are not setting your mind on the things of God,**  
**but on the things of man"** (8:33).

The things of man are the ways we would imagine the Christ to be.  
We'd imagine a powerful, charismatic ruler.  
We'd follow all the best leadership advice:  
about having a vision and sticking to it;  
about being courageous and not letting anything set us back;  
about strength, and power, and winning at all costs,  
and judging effectiveness by growth.

But the things of man, we see here, are really the things of Satan.

And Satan has no room in his leadership manual for suffering, rejection, and death.

The Jesus that wants to go the way of the cross—  
well what sort of leader is He?

Peter was ashamed of the cross.  
He was ashamed of weakness and humility,  
ashamed of Jesus not having a strong vision of growth and power.  
This Jesus wasn't the *Awesome God* he thought He would be.

And so it is that we're sometimes ashamed of this Jesus also.

We're ashamed of our Church,  
that it's too small or too ineffective.  
We're ashamed of the Gospel,  
that salvation is too free, too easy, too simple, too broad.  
We're ashamed to talk about sin and suffering, and death and hell—  
that sort of talk turns people away, it's not winsome or inviting.  
We're ashamed to call a thing like it is, a sin a sin, a spade a spade.

This Jesus goes about being Christ in ways that we never would.

And thank God for that!  
 For this Jesus does His Christ-bit all in the way of the cross—  
 in the way of weakness and suffering and rejection and death—  
*all for you.*

He calls a sin a sin not so that you die in your sin,  
 but so that you confess your sin and live!

He shows you how you're ashamed of Him, not to leave you depressed or despairing,  
 but so that you'd admit your shame and receive His gracious forgiveness.

**“Who do people say that I am?”** Jesus asks (8:27).

Well in this sinful world, there's a whole lot of answers.

But any Jesus that comes without His cross, suffering, rejection, and death,  
 isn't the Jesus of Scripture,  
 and so it's no Jesus at all!

But the Jesus of Scripture, with cross, weakness, rejection, and suffering,  
 is the Jesus that does it all for you.

So simple.  
 Shamefully simple.  
 And yet that's the way Jesus wants to be Christ.

For you.  
 Freely.  
 Simply.

He's the Jesus that takes up His cross for you.

And to follow Him,  
 to follow *this* Jesus,  
 He's given you your cross as well.

So don't be ashamed of your suffering in this life, or this Church's suffering,  
 it's simply another way our Lord joins us to Himself.  
 It's His way of being Christ.

And He's the sort of Christ who's nail wounds in His hands always remain.  
 He's the sort that gives His body for you, His blood was shed for you.  
 He took up His cross, *for you!*

So your many crosses, your suffering and rejection, are simply your participation in Christ.

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