



24th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Isaiah 50:5-9a
Ps 116:1-6, 8-9
James 2:14-18
Mark 8:27-35

Monday Sept. 14 Exaltation of the Cross

Numbers 21:4b-9
Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-38
Philemon 2:6-11
John 3:13-17

Tuesday Sept. 15 Our Lady of Sorrows

1 Tim 3:1-13
Ps 101:1b-3ab, 5-6
John 19:25-27
or Luke 2:33-35

Wednesday Sept. 16 Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian

1 Tim 3:14-16
Ps 111:1-6
Luke 7:31-35

Thursday Sept. 17

1 Tim 4:12-16
Ps 111:7-10
Luke 7:36-50

Friday Sept. 18

1 Tim 6:2c-12
Ps 49:6-10, 17-20
Luke 8:1-3

Saturday Sept. 19

1 Tim 6:13-16
Ps 100:1b-5
Luke 8:4-15

James 2:14-18 defines the doctrine of faith and works and their inter-relationship.

Works without faith, no matter how good the works are, don't get us into heaven. Some of us try to earn our way into God's heart by serving in church activities, saying all the "right" prayers, and so on. This idea comes from our childhood when we learned: "I'm good enough, Mom and Dad will reward me" and "If I do well in school, the teacher will give me a gold star" or smiley face or whatever it is they paste on homework today.

The problem is, we can never be good enough for heaven. This is why Jesus came to earth and took our sins to the cross.

Faith without works isn't going to get us into heaven, either. Here's why:

Faith in Jesus starts with believing that, in his love for us,

he died for us and rose again so that we'll have eternal life. This is what opens the door to heaven. However, to walk through that door, we have to follow Jesus. This requires doing more than believing in his death and resurrection; we also believe in his life – *how* he lived. Following Jesus affects our lifestyles and our behavior. How Christ-like is it?

The proof that we truly do have faith is evidenced in the good works that we do. Faith in Jesus means we love him so much that we love everyone whom he loves, which is *everyone* regardless of whether they deserve it or not.

And faith in Jesus means we trust him so much that we do whatever he tells us – imitating him in all of our activities, adopting his attitudes, and responding to his calling to serve as priests, religious, and lay ministers.



Thus when Jesus says to us in the Gospel reading, "Who do you say that I am?" we answer that he is our Savior who takes us to heaven, and he is our Lord who teaches us how to live, and he is our Lover who empowers us to love others even when it becomes a cross to bear.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Is Jesus Christ truly your Lord and Savior? Do you believe that he suffered and died on your behalf so that you could reach heaven?
2. Are you doing good works because you adore him so much that you want to go where he goes and do what he does and serve as his hands and feet and voice wherever he leads you?
3. How does your life convey to others that Jesus is your Lord and Savior?
4. If you wore no Christian jewelry and spoke no words, how would you tell others who Jesus is?