



MEDITATIONS FOR LENT by Father Robbie Low

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY Luke 9: 22-25

When you join the winning side the very last thing you expect is to be prepared for what seems like a crushing defeat. In Luke's account this brief and alarming passage takes place between the Petrine confession, Peter declaring Jesus to be the Christ, the expected Saviour, the leader who will triumph and restore Israel and the revelation of the Transfiguration, the vision of Heaven, the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. Jesus announcement that He will be rejected and, indeed, judicially murdered by the authorities who have, one might suppose, so long expected Him, is incomprehensible to His followers. What then does He mean by the extraordinary phrase – 'to be raised up on the third day....'. Utterly bewildering.

We live with the benefit of hindsight. The Apostles enjoyed no such luxury. What sense can they have made of Jesus' call to 'take up your cross'? The cross, after all, is an alien instrument of torture and death. It is Roman and it is vicious. It doesn't sound much like victory to the disciples.

Yet the Cross is at the heart of the Christian Faith. It is its sign and its symbol, its central proclamation – the place where apparent crushing defeat is transformed into victory. No-one who would conquer in the Christian life can circumvent it. The road to salvation lies always and everywhere through the Calvary. There are no short cuts to salvation, no way round the final battle on the Jerusalem hilltop. The road to eternal life leads through the sacrifice of Christ and our participation in it. It is what we celebrate every time we come to Mass.

Spiritual exercise: Take your crucifix and kiss it as you thank Jesus for His love for you that brought Him to Calvary.