

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A. August 23, 2020

First Reading Is 22:19-23, Second Reading 11:33-36, Gospel Matt 16:13-20

Theme: Who Is Jesus for Me.

The Gospel reading of today presents us with Jesus encounter with his disciples at the region of Caesarea Philippi. Caesarea Philippi lies in the Northern east of Sea of Galilee near the head water of the Jordan River and its population is predominantly non Jewish people. It is this place that he has chosen to ask this pressing question in his heart. Besides, It is gradually getting close to the end of his life when he would head towards Jerusalem for the work he has come to accomplish, as such he wanted to be sure that his closest disciples knew and understood who he was and his mission. He then has to withdraw to this area of Caesarea Philippi where he could be alone with his disciples so that he can ask them the question deep down in his heart. Thus, he first put the question to them in a general form “who do people say that the son of Man is? After which he directed the second question to them personally and directly, “But you, who do you say that I am” Peter answers on behalf of the apostles that Jesus was the Christ the son of the living God.

Jesus addresses the same question to each of us today. “Who do you say that I am” Who is Jesus for me, who is Jesus for you? This question demands a personal response. The response each person gives depends on one’s relationship and commitment to Jesus. Peter’s response was that Jesus is the Son of the Living God. By this response Peter implies that no human category can give a perfect description of Jesus and the reaction of Jesus to Peter’s response confirms it. This is the reason Jesus said, it is not flesh and blood that has revealed it to you but my heavenly Father.

One central message we get from this passage is that our knowledge of Jesus is a personal discovery. It is not knowing about Jesus but knowing Jesus. It is not how much I have read about Jesus or studied what others said about Jesus but who is Jesus for me as a person. He is asking every one of us; What do you think of me? It demands a personal experience to enter into a relationship with him which can be realized through life of prayer, spending time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and reading the scriptures. When we commit ourselves to some these activities with openness and faithfulness Jesus reveals himself to us. It is then one would be able to give a personal response to who Jesus is.