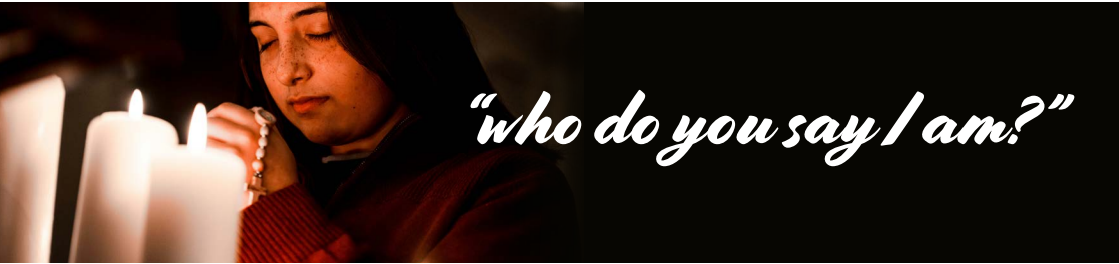


# Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year C - Feast of Saints Peter and Paul

A resource for personal, family and community prayer.



*"who do you say I am?"*

## *Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20*

*You are invited to read the Gospel passage attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.*

<sup>13</sup>When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

<sup>14</sup>And they said, "Some People say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

<sup>15</sup>"But you," he said, "who do you say I am?"

<sup>16</sup>Then Simon Peter spoke up, "You are the Christ," he said "the Son of the living God."

<sup>17</sup>Jesus replied, "Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in Heaven.

<sup>18</sup>So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven."

<sup>20</sup>Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

## Background to Gospel passage

**Where does it happen?** It happens in the region of Caesarea Phillip. This was a city located in the foothills of Mount Hermon, about fifteen miles north of the sea of Galilee near the source of the river Jordan.

**When does it happen?** It is a beautiful location, perfect for a getaway, and it may be that Jesus wants to spend time alone with his disciples.

**Who is there?** Jesus and his disciples. When Matthew speaks of disciples he is usually referring to the Apostles alone – the twelve who were closest to Jesus.

**What happens?** In today's Gospel passage we meet Jesus at a very crucial stage in his ministry. Jesus is wondering what do people in general make of him? What is their understanding of him? The disciples have no difficulty repeating what other people think. This is the lead-in to the much more personal and challenging question: what about you who have accompanied me from the beginning, observed me in my dealings with people, listened to my message and its impact on others – "Who do you say that I am?" Peter recognises and af-

firms Jesus' true Identity - "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God". Peter has seen, touched, heard and felt the unique presence

of the living God in Jesus. Now he is ready to be entrusted with greater responsibility and a greater leadership role in the mission of Jesus.

**Suggested Guidelines** to help you recognise this passage in your life experience.

**"Who do you say that I am?"**

Can you remember a time in conversation with a close friend or at a time of prayer when you were searching for answers to the deeper questions in life: Who am I? What is the purpose of my life? Where am I going in life?

**"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."**

Can you remember an encounter with a family member or friend where you were affirmed in your deeper identity and mission in life and you just knew they spoke the truth?

**"You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church."**

Who is the person who has been like a 'rock' in your life – solid, strong and reliable - the one you can always count on to be there for you and to help you find answers to the really important questions in your life?

**"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven."**

Can you remember a time when someone recognised your integrity and gifts, and chose you for an important position of leadership and responsibility?

**What does this Gospel remind me of?** *Where was it? When was it? Who was there? What happened?*

***Now I can see that God's loving presence and action were in that life experience.***

**Prayer Response** - you are invited to respond in prayer in your own words.

*Heavenly Father, I thank you for the times when I have experienced this Gospel in my life...*

*Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the times I have fallen short of living this Gospel...*

*Heavenly Father, please help me to live this Gospel...*



You are invited to deepen this prayer experience by resting your heart silently in God's presence and love. The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage may help you on this journey to stillness and silence.

### **An Invitation to Reflect**

What new insight has the Gospel opened my eyes to see?

### **Action**

This week I will try to live the Gospel by...

### **Thought for the week**

Only the genuinely wise are worthy of leadership.

*Rest in this truth, hold it in prayer and trust that it will bear fruit in your life.*



Jesus gave Peter a very important job. He asked Peter to be a leader in His Church. Peter believed in Jesus, and that strong faith helped others believe too.

Can you think of a person—a grandparent, a teacher or a parent—who helps you feel close to Jesus?

Draw or write about this Jesus person and how they have helped you to feel close to Jesus.



Father, I thank You for the gift of this story which has helped me to see the strong presence of Your Son in my life. Help me to believe in You and follow the people who help me grow closer to You.

**Action:** this week I will try to show love by...

Living the Word will take a break for the summer months and will return in September. Wishing everyone a lovely summer from the Living the Word Team.

**E. lectiocentre35@gmail.com**