

Twenty-First Sunday of Ordinary Time - A -2020
Is.22.15,19-23///Romans 11.33-36///Matthew 16.13-20

→There you are sitting on a park bench on a warm sunny Saturday afternoon...undisturbed by the comings and goings of the afternoon crowd...until you catch a glimpse of them from the corner of your eye...you can't help to look back trying not to stare or be noticed.

→he's giving her a ring...sparkling in the late afternoon sun...lit by the love in his sweetheart's eyes.

→it is a moment...the first of many actually – that will change their lives forever

→both of them will mark this day...circling it in their memory...savoring it for all the joy it can hold.

→in that moment...he is inviting her...asking her...proposing to her to become his partner for as long as they both shall live.

→for months now...they have courted each other...they have danced to the music of “what may be” and both have wondered...“is this the special one”

→then it happens...all their emails and cards, dates by candlelight and soft whispers over coffee turn into brilliant wonder...he asks...she says “yes” and together they begin their journey

→in that “diamond ring” moment...awareness comes over them that changes, transforms, and blesses them forever

PAUSE

→[well] a similar pivotal moment of awareness also happens in today's gospel reading

→today Jesus attempts to find something out about himself by asking his unsuspecting disciples two intriguing questions

“who do people say the Son of Man is?” and *“who do you say that I am?”*

→I can only imagine the surprise and anxiety of the disciples to answer those questions

→[now] the first question was pretty easy, since the disciples had witnessed all that Jesus had been doing....they answered.....

→ “some say you are John the Baptist, back from the dead”

→“others say Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the other prophets of old”

→it was...like picking A, B, C, or all of the above

→but then Jesus asks the second question, *“but who do you say that I am,”*

→in essence...he waves off the results of the opinion polls and asks the disciples...to put into words their own confession of faith

PAUSE

→I wonder how long the silence lasted.....before someone spoke up.....taking the risk of either being the dunce or the valedictorian of the group.

→and of course it was Simon Peter...which should come as no surprise

→in fact, Peter was usually the first one to open his mouth...but the problem is that often Peter’s mouth was going [in gear] before his mind or heart could catch up...

→remember...it was Peter who just a few weeks ago offered to walk out to Jesus on the dangerous water...it was Peter who asked how many times we should forgive an offending person...and it was Peter who said that even if everyone else denied Jesus he would never do it

→which begs the question....did Peter really know who Jesus was....////....and perhaps that is also a question we need to ask ourselves as well...

→these days do we really know who Jesus is for us?

→and if not, then **how** and **where** can we get to know him

PAUSE

→now naturally...one of the prime answers is right here in Church as we gather each week to celebrate the Lord's supper

---"where two or three are gathered in my name...I am with them."

→and so we can find Jesus as we gather around the table...

→we can also get to know Jesus when he speaks to us...through SS....we know that J. is the Word and so the Word when spoken is Jesus speaking to us

--Jesus also speaks to us through others as well...family and friends, co-workers and others

--often Jesus will speak to us in the most unexpected ways and at times we least imagine

→and finally we get to know Jesus up close and personal as we receive his body and blood each week here at Mass

→so it is obvious, that we certainly meet and know who Jesus is here at Mass but...is this the only place where we can meet and know him in today's world?

→what about the other 6 days of the week?

where do we meet and know Jesus on those days? Where can we get close to Jesus and know him better on those days?

→well...I would hope, that we could first meet and know Jesus in our homes

I would hope that we meet and come to know Jesus in the people of our familiesas we gather around our dinner tables each day...as we live and take care of each other.

as we say our grace and as we spend time with those we love.

---I would also hope that we meet and know Jesus, during the week, when we reach out to those in need.

when we share with others....when we are patient and kind.... compassionate and giving to those come in contact with each and every day.

---and finally I would hope we meet and know Jesus in our prayer....

when we are tired or depressed, frightened or confused, angry or hurt....I would hope that our prayer would help us to meet and know who Jesus is for us

→[you see] ---that is the meaning of today's gospel reading when Jesus asks his disciple who he is.....

→it is about knowing Jesus up close and personal, not only on Sundays or when we need something, but at every moment of our lives

and that remains our challenge each and every day of our lives...to be able to know Jesus up close and personal...especially when our beliefs are challenged, our faith is tested, our soul is dared

→when common popular thought is seen as contrary to the gospel message.

and so maybe, that is the task before us today.... to take the timeto truly know who Jesus is

to know Jesus.....not only as we gather here.....but as we join hands around our supper table at home.....as we reach out to those who are needy and lonely....and as we fold our hands each day in prayer

PAUSE

→there is no doubt, that at times, we are like Peter and speak....//.....before our minds and hearts catch up...

→for some of us.....maybe we have yet to come to know Jesus up close and personal and we are still searching....

→for others.....maybe the bus-y-ness of our lives, the demands of work and career, the pressure of family have prevented us from taking the time to know Jesus the way we should.....

→but the day is coming when we too will be asked..."who do you say that I am"

→and if we take the time here and now to really know who Jesus is in our lives...then we will be able to answer as Peter does and say:

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God

→the only difference however ...is that we might actually be able to believe and know
what those words truly mean