

21st Sunday of the Year homily

“Who do you say that I am?”

Nearly 30 youth have given us an answer to that question.

Jesus addresses the question not only to the disciples in the gospel story, but to us, his present day disciples.

“Who do YOU say that I am?”

And we, like the youth of our community, would give all kinds of answers.

But who does Jesus says answers the question best?

It is Simon whom Jesus gives the nickname, Peter which means ROCK.

It is this rock on whom Jesus chooses as leader of the community.

It is this ROCK who would sin most seriously.

Three times would Peter would later deny even knowing Jesus.

Three times would Jesus forgive Peter.

Now here we are, the present day disciples of Jesus, all gathered together in faith.

Surely Jesus would address the same question to us:

“Whom to you say that I am?”

I am sure we would give a lot of answers just in the first disciples did in the gospel (you are Elijah, John the Baptist, one of the prophets). We would give many of the same answers that our young people did.

But, since Simon Peter is not here today, to whom would Jesus personally address his question, “to you, Mary James, to you, Ed, to you, Michelle, to you, Vernard,? “Who do you say that I am?”

I am quite sure I know who he would personally ask.

It would be the person here who would have sinned against him most grievously;

turned your back on Jesus,

cast him out of your life.

Yes, it would be that person who, by your words and actions, has denied that you even know Jesus.

BUT it would also be that person, even though you may have denied him in word and deed, you have also experienced his overwhelming love and forgiveness.

Jesus chose Peter as the firm peg, the foundation, the first leader of the Church because he came to know intimately the

overflowing love and forgiveness of God.

(Pause)

Today we gather for a parish picnic. God has blessed us with another wonderful turnout and good weather.

During this past summer we have reached out to serve the neighborhood through the camp program for youth and young adult program for neighborhood young adult men.

Parents continue to struggle every day to care for their children.

Youth try hard to live faithful lives.

Adults in our community attempt to live as witnesses of the Lord in the midst of a secular world.

But all our efforts, be they individual or as members of this faith community, will run out of steam unless we personally answer one gospel question: “Who do you say that I am?” Unless we gratefully receive the love and forgiveness of the Lord, we will not have the spiritual energy to survive the challenges of life.

In fact, is that not what the ALPHA program in the fall and gathering is all about? Is that not why we gather every Sunday to renew our experience of the Lord in our lives?

And we, the people of Corpus Christi, who HAVE known the OVERWHELMING goodness and forgiveness of God can answer, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”.

Then Paul’s words in the second reading today can be ours:

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!

**For from him
and through him
and for him are all things.
To him be glory forever. Amen.**