

‘JESUS ASKS ‘BUT WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?’ – HOMILY - 27 AUGUST 2017.

It is a busy time this fortnight with the Sacrament of Confirmation for our children.  
We will postpone our parish Migrant and Refugee Sunday celebration until October 1<sup>st</sup>.  
though there will be a special focus on the 1<sup>st</sup> of our Friday Night Vigils on September 8<sup>th</sup>,  
and in our prayers of petition today.

Yesterday we celebrated the Requiem Mass of Thanksgiving for June’s life.  
A sacred moment.

Last night the first group of children were confirmed.  
A sacred moment.

Let us turn to a sacred moment in today’s Gospel. **Matthew 16:13-20.**

### TWO QUESTIONS OF JESUS

We focus this time on the **two questions of Jesus** in today’s Gospel.  
Jesus to the disciples:

*‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’*

It is sometimes easier to say what others think.  
We can conduct surveys which are helpful.  
We can go online to see what others say.

But the second question puts the disciples on the spot.

*‘But who do you say that I am?’*

Let us invite Jesus now to put us on the spot.  
How are we going to answer?

*‘But who do you say that I am?’*

Note the response of Jesus:

*‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah!  
For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you,  
but my Father in heaven. ‘*

To say sincerely and from deep within, who Jesus really is –  
Involves both being blessed by God  
And receiving this revelation from God.

Jesus is neither consulting a dictionary,  
nor a mobile app  
nor a Google search nor Wikipedia.  
The second question is **personal**.

Our belief, our response to Jesus affects the lives of others.

The response of Jesus continues:

*'And I tell you, you are Peter,  
and on this rock I will build my church,  
and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.  
I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,  
and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven,  
and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'*

## CALLING

Peter's **calling** includes mission, a role, a gifting and an assurance.  
The **mission** will continue to unfold over the years to come for Peter.  
The **role** will continue to unfold over the years to come for Peter.

The **gifting of the keys** and **God's recognition** of the **binding and loosing on earth** are sacred gifts to Peter and the building of church community.

The **assurance** will continue to inspire through challenging times.  
We could be tempted to become very negative about the world today.  
In such paralysing pessimism, we forget the promise and assurance of Jesus that *'the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.'*

**HOW DO WE CARRY THE CROSS TODAY WITH THIS ASSURANCE OF JESUS?  
HOW DO WE CARRY THE CROSS WITH HOPE AND LOVE AND PERSEVERANCE?**

**HOW DO WE FACE THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US, KNOWING THAT GOD JOURNEYS WITH US?**  
Embracing justice, wholeness, mercy, humility,  
honesty, transparency and accountability.

**HOW DO WE SEE AND TOUCH THE GOODNESS AROUND US?**

From the perspective of justice and mercy, **this assurance of Jesus** enables us to work together in hope,  
to struggle together to make a difference,  
to respect and love our neighbour,  
to be family.  
This assurance of Jesus, is **accompanied by the daily love of Jesus.**

**REFLECTING ON THE SACRED MOMENT**

**HOW MANY TIMES WOULD PETER HAVE REFLECTED BACK ON THIS SACRED MOMENT?  
REFLECTING AS HE PRAYED TO GOD FOR DISCERNMENT IN VARYING SITUATIONS?**

**In moments**

of listening,  
of trial,  
of preaching,  
of leading,  
of healing,  
of loving,

of worshipping,  
of celebrating,  
of giving thanks,  
of asking for strength,  
of forgiving,  
of giving counsel,  
of being firm.

## HOW DO WE REFLECT BACK ON OUR SACRED MOMENTS WITH GOD?

### COMMUNITY

This sacred moment takes place in the presence of the other disciples.  
They can hear Jesus speak to Peter.  
The small community hears Jesus command Peter.

## HOW DID THE EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY REFLECT ON THIS COMMAND?

### SURPRISE

Peter will be **surprised by Jesus** in many ways, as he continued to live out his calling.

Each of us are invited to write down **how God has surprised us** over the years

- Surprised us when we **felt lost**.
- Surprised us when we **thought** that we had everything **under control**.
- Surprised us when we made a decision to go one way and the Holy Spirit **prompted** us in a **different direction**.
- Surprised us when we didn't think we could do something, and in prayer we found that God has prepared us for this moment.

What a certainty.

That God will surprise us.

That our loving God will invite us **to trust**,  
**to venture** into the deep, into the unknown.

I invite each of us this week

To ponder our **mission**, our **role**, our **gifts** and **assurance** from Jesus.

To pray with God about it.

And to answer the question of Jesus

***'But who do you say that I am?'***

In love, let us pray.

Fr Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Jesus asks, but who do you say I am? – 27 August 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/082717.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook27082017>]