

## CONFESSION OF ST PETER

JANUARY 18, 2021

A question is a sentence designed for a response. In the course of a day, how many questions do we ask? Ask both of others and of ourselves. How are you, what do you think, can you help me with this? Questions may be my main source of information. Knowing my memory is not as good as it once was, I need to also check in with myself - about the time of day and what day of the week it is. Why have I come into this room? What is that person's name – she looks so familiar but I am drawing a blank.

The one question I have not asked anyone else yet – what is my name? I seemed to have held onto that information and remember it. When I feel I have “lost my way” or become distracted, I have been tempted to maybe ask “who am I”? The obvious answers are - I am a nun, a sister, an aunt, a daughter, a friend and a Christian. But really, who am I? What have I been called to do and am I doing it? Am I following my calling as best as I can?

Jesus always knew who He was and there were others who did also. When He was an infant there those who recognized His destiny – the Magi with their gifts worthy of a king, Simeon and Anna in the temple. They explained it to Mary and Joseph, who frankly were overwhelmed and could not take it in. Jesus did not question or doubt His ministry – the first occasion was when He stayed behind in the temple to talk with the elders and felt it was where He belonged. As He got older, He would live out His destiny and tell others of it. He spread His message to anyone who would listen and would invite the most unlikely people to join Him – tax collectors, sinners, the infirm and those on the fringes of society. Jesus was always honest about the difficulty of following Him – the sacrifices to be made - giving up a former life, sharing resources with others, being humble, thinking of others first and being willing to be the last.

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

In today's Gospel we heard Jesus ask that question himself – not because He did not know, but to hear from the disciples who had followed Him for years and to test them.

He was not John the Baptist, nor was he Moses or Elijah or Jeremiah. He wanted to find out if the apostles could answer the question and Peter got it right – “you are the Messiah”. He asked the question as the journey to Jerusalem was coming to an end. Maybe to check if they understood what had happened during those years on the road and maybe to see if they could fathom what was looming on the horizon.

But Jesus also had to endure all the times that others got it wrong. The Pharisees and Sadducees did not recognize Him for anything more than a thorn in their side and a threat to their power. Yes, He was a carpenter's son and some could not get past seeing Him that way. But that was not His mission in the world – He had left that behind in Nazareth.

Ironically, those who recognized Jesus were the ones whom you would not expect – the demons, the lepers and the blind and the infirm wanting to be healed, the woman at the well, and a Roman soldier.

## **Do I recognize Jesus? Even if He is with me all the time.**

I sympathize with the disciples not fully understanding Jesus. Not only was He and His message so different from anything that had gone before, but as the journey neared Jerusalem and as it was coming to an end, the enormity of what He was telling them was beyond their comprehension. Would you have been able to understand or foresee the events to come in Jerusalem?

**Would I understand – would I recognize Jesus for who He was? Would I deny Him for my own safety? I honestly do not know.**

Pilate himself tried to find out who He was but only got an ambiguous answer – He did not admit or deny being King of the Jews. The procession to the cross did nothing to explain who He was but He was still mocked for being a king. The one thief mocked Him but the other came to His defense.

**Who would recognize Him?**

The post resurrection experiences did not make things any clearer. Even Mary who knew Him as well as anyone else while alive had difficulty after the resurrection. Supposing Him to be the gardener she blurted out “What have you done with my Lord?” On the road to Emmaus He was invisible to His companions. And who was that grilling fish on the shore?

**Could I recognize Him now?**

Is it so hard to recognize Jesus? Really all I need to do is look around. Everyone is Jesus – He dwells in all of us.

He is everywhere and in everyone. Look around and see. Look around.