



21st Sunday Ord. Time Yr A

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Our text concludes Jesus' movements, from place to place as he chose, to making his way to Jerusalem to fulfil his Father's will – his role as Saviour of mankind. He has been trying to get the message understood that faith in him is the way to eternal life and the empowerment of his disciples. Even faith without understanding is powerful, as in last Sunday's Gospel – the cure of the Canaanite woman's daughter. After that event Jesus went back to Lake Galilee and into the hills where people (with the seeds of faith) came for cures. Then Jesus, out of compassion for the people with him for three days, challenged his disciples' faith in him. How might they feed the crowds? They still think about how much bread they would need rather than trusting in Jesus. Jesus then feeds the crowds with the seven loaves and a few fish – i.e. the second Miracle of the Loaves. Jesus moves to Magdala, on the shore of the Lake, where the Pharisees ask for a sign. They still can't/won't see that he is the sign. On the way to the other side of the Lake, even the disciples are not yet seeing beyond the need for food in the Miracles of the Loaves. They start to look beyond food when Jesus tells them to not trust the yeast of the Pharisees. He doesn't mean yeast for bread but something else. Our text sees them move north to the edge of Palestine, Caesarea Philippi. There Jesus asks them: "Who do you say I am?" It is Peter who speaks for the disciples – by the gift of faith. They have come to understand who he is! Others still won't understand and could misconstrue his teachings. After this profession of faith, Jesus starts his journey south to Jerusalem – to the Cross.

Read: **Matthew 16: 13 - 20**

Meditatio: Do I have faith with understanding? Do I get upset by people's lack of faith; was Jesus moving away (from Jerusalem) because people wouldn't believe in him?? Who do I say Jesus is? Is Jesus more than a prophet or wise sage for me? Do I talk about my faith or do I let others speak for me? Do I truly believe that Jesus is the Christ (i.e. the Anointed One), the Son of the living God? Do I appreciate the gift of faith that I have through my baptism? Do I realize that I was anointed in the character/name of Christ at my baptism? Do I look to the successor of Peter, the Pope, as an inspiration for my faith? Do I believe in the invincible power of faith? What do I understand about Papal Infallibility; the dogmas of the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception are considered instances of Papal Infallibility? Do I understand my faith well enough to be able to help people with their faith? Do I seek clarification of my faith from priests (who share in the teaching role of Christ)? Is my faith a rock on which I build my life? How important is my faith to me?

Oratio: Pray for deeper faith and better understanding of faith. Pray for trust/faith in Jesus. Pray that biblical prophets, as well as the doctors of the Church, will lead us to know and love Jesus more. Pray for a better understanding of the gift of Baptism. Pray for the Pope and teachers of the faith including bishops, priests and catechists. Pray for the Church. Pray that faith will remain strong no matter what challenge, e.g. the limitations caused by the Pandemic. Pray that all may be given faith to believe in Jesus. Pray for those who do not know who Christ is. Pray for law makers, both Church and civil authorities. Pray that laws may be applied with love and compassion. Pray for those who find laws and regulations difficult to follow.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer — Take time to appreciate how life-giving is the gift of faith.

✍ Fr Joe

Matthew 16: 13 – 20

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?’ And they said, ‘Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’

‘But you,’ he said, ‘who do you say I am?’

Then Simon Peter spoke up, ‘You are the Christ,’ he said, ‘the Son of the living God.’

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.

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. 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.’

Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

*

Caesarea Philippi is inland from Caesarea which is a coastal town. Caesarea Philippi was built by Philip son of Herod the Great who had built a temple to the emperor Augustus there. The town was largely gentile (i.e. non-Jewish). It is in the foothills of the triple-peaked Mt Hermon, one of the sources of the Jordan River. This river flows to Lake Galilee and ends up in the Dead Sea.