# **“Who do you say that I AM”**

Today in the gospel, we heard how Jesus first asked His disciples **“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”** Then He asked a direct question of those who were closest to Him, His disciples, **“But who do you say that I am?”** It is interesting to hear the answers that the apostles came up with to both questions To the first questions, they were answers they probably obtained while acting as those who we call modern day undercover agents or detectives.

Can you imagine the disciples probably going incognito among the Jewish people eavesdropping on the community to find out what they thought who the Son of Man is! The disciples came up with names of some of the prophets who had died at the hands of the authorities except John the Baptist who was murdered by Herod and Elijah who was assumed into heaven. However, to the second question, Peter answered **“You are the Christ.”**

Have you ever wondered sometimes what people think of you and how they define you? Do they see you as a good neighbor who is full of zeal for Christ? Do they see you as somebody who is caring, loving, funny, dependable, loyal, and merciful? Do they see you as a humble person? Do they see you as Christ like? Or do they see you as self-centered, manipulative, greedy, sarcastic, and irresponsible, among other things? Do they interact with you as friends like ***“two ships passing in the night?”***

Most of the time, like Jesus, we are defined by people who we feel do not fully know us or we are defined by those who are ready to destroy our identity before others for their own benefit so they may look good to others. How do we handle such a situation? Do we turn to our closest friends or family members who know us better for comfort like Jesus did with His apostles, or do we ***“take an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth?”***

However, the burning question that should be in our hearts is who does Jesus think that I am? Does He see me as a slave who does not know what his/her Master is doing? Or does He see me as a friend who believes everything He Jesus heard from His Father, which He passed on to His apostles who passed them on to His Church?

Do I take His teachings to heart? Am I working on passing them on to others through the way I talk, act, and live my life? For example, Jesus told the people who wanted to stone the woman in adulterous relationship to cast the first stone if they had never sinned. Does that tell me that Jesus Himself taught us that stoning people who commit adultery is wrong as the Church passed the message along? Jesus told us to be light of the world; do I instead let the world be my light?

St Francis of Assisi was once heard praying: ***“Who are you God? And, who am I?”*** Both questions asked by Francis puts the two commandments of Jesus into perspective about His teaching on the most important commandment in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 22. His response was, God first and Francis’ neighbors second. So do I put God first in my life?

It is when we know who God is that we can then ask, does He see me as a mother, sister, or brother? Because, as His mother, His sister, or His brother, we become members of His family and we are connected to Him by His blood of the everlasting covenant. He will be in us and we will be in Him. It would do us a lot of good if we ask ourselves this one more question. Are we fully following Jesus by following His Gospel as passed on through His Church?

As we heard, even Peter, chosen to lead His Apostles did not at first believe Him. He was afraid of the cross and could not accept that Jesus would suffer. His action was to pull Jesus aside to rebuke Him. Jesus’ response was great! Jesus openly responded by calling Peter ‘Satan’ in front of the rest of the Apostles. Our question to this response should be, will Jesus call me ‘Satan’ because I do not believe in all the teachings He passed on through His Church?

Again, can the world tell by my belief, by my actions, and words that I follow Jesus? Can I say to Him in answering His question as Peter did that I truly believe that **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God?”**

As we come to the table of the Lord to receive Him, let us tell Jesus **“I believe, help my unbelief.”**