

+21<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY A 2008  
Matthew 16:13-20  
“Who do you say that I am?”  
And Peter replied  
You are Christ the Son of the living God.

ONCE WE HAVE HEARD THE ANSWER,

THEN WE KNOW HOW TO RESPOND TO THE QUESTION,  
WHEN THE QUESTION COMES UP AGAIN.

FOR EXAMPLE:

THIS SUMMER I WAS WITH MY NEPHEW TOM AND ALL THE  
GRADE SCHOOL GRAND NIECES AND NEPHEWS  
AND TOM SAYS TO THEM AND TO ME  
LET’S SEE IF UNCLE TOBY KNOWS THE ANSWER.

THEN HE ASKED ME:

HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE THE CAPITAL OF KENTUCKY  
LOUISVILLE OR LOUVILL?

AND I ANSWERED: FRANKFART

HE LAUGHTED AND SAID SOMETHING NICE, LIKE HOW SMART I WAS.

I ANSWERED CORRECTLY BECAUSE I HAD HEARD THIS QUESTION

AND THE ANSWER BEFORE.

OH HOW I WISH THAT THE MESSAGE OF TODAY’S GOSPEL

WAS AS EASY AS THE QUESTION ABOUT KENTUCKY

BUT IT IS DEEPER AND MORE PERSONAL THAN THAT.

MAYBE THESE EXAMPLES MAY HELP US TO UNDERSTAND.

EVERY DAY, FOR YEARS,

HE VISITED HIS WIFE IN THE NURSING HOME.

SHE SUFFERED FROM ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE;

WITH EACH DAY SHE SLIPPED FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY

IN THE FOG OF DEMENTIA.

EVERY DAY HE WOULD FEED HER LUNCH.

HE WOULD SIT WITH HER

AND SHOW HER THE PICTURES OF THE CHILDREN,

TELLING HER THE LATEST FAMILY NEWS AND STORIES

WHICH SHE WOULD FORGET

AS SOON AS SHE HEARD THEM.

HE WOULD PATIENTLY REMIND HER WHO HE WAS

AND EXPLAIN THAT THEY WERE MARRIED

AND HAD BEEN FOR THE PAST 52 YEARS

AND THEY HAD TWO DAUGHTERS AND A SON

AND FOUR BEAUTIFUL GRANDCHILDREN.

HE WOULD HOLD HER HAND

AS SHE DRIFTED IN AND OUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

BEFORE LEAVING, HE WOULD KISS HER

AND TELL HER HOW MUCH HE LOVED HER

AND SHE WOULD NEVER REALIZE

NOR REMEMBER LATER

THAT HE HAD EVEN BEEN THERE.

HIS HEARTBROKEN FRIENDS WOULD ASK HIM,

“WHY DO YOU KEEP GOING

WHEN SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHO YOU ARE?”

AND HE WOULD ALWAYS REPLY,

“BECAUSE I KNOW WHO I AM.”

**THIS HUSBAND'S FAITHFULNESS**

**IS THE PERFECT AND COMPLETE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION**

**THAT JESUS POSES TO PETER AND THE APOSTLES**

**IN TODAY'S GOSPEL.**

IN OUR REALIZING EXACTLY WHO JESUS IS

AND THE GOSPEL THAT HE EMBODIES

**WE START TO UNDERSTAND WHO WE ARE**

**AND WHAT OUR LIVES ARE ABOUT.**

TODAY'S GOSPEL ASKS US

**EXACTLY WHAT DO WE MEAN**

**WHEN WE SAY THAT**

**“WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST**

**GOD'S ONLY SON AND OUR LORD”.**

THE ANSWER THAT WE GIVE

CAN ONLY REALLY BE SPOKEN IN OUR ACTIONS.

**WE PROCLAIM WHAT WE BELIEVE**

**MORE BY WHAT WE DO**

**THAN BY WHAT WE SAY.**

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES THAT COME TO MY MIND

LIKE MOST MOMS,

HER LIFE IS A WHIRLWIND OF CARPOOLING, COOKING, SHOPPING,

LAUNDRY, CLEANING, MENDING AND MANAGING.

BUT SHE HAPPILY SPENDS AN HOUR

EACH WEDNESDAY AFTER SCHOOL

HELPING THE PARISH 2<sup>ND</sup> GRADERS

PREPARE FOR THEIR FIRST COMMUNION.

EVERY WEEK HE MAKES HIS "ROUNDS" OF A DOZEN ELDERLY SHUT-INS

WHO CAN NO LONGER COME TO MASS ON SUNDAYS.

HE BRINGS THE EUCHARIST,

ALONG WITH HIS GOOD CHEER AND GENEROSITY,

OFFERING TO RUN ANY ERRANDS

HIS CONGREGATION MIGHT NEED.

AND EACH SUNDAY WHEN HE AND HIS WIFE ATTEND MASS

HE PRAYS FOR EACH ONE OF THOSE

ON HIS COMMUNION LIST.

THEY SHOW UP EARLY BEFORE MASS.

THEY MAKE SURE THAT EVERYTHING IS READY  
FOR THE MASS  
EITHER AS LITURGY CO-ORDINATORS  
OR AS ALTAR SERVERS

THEY ARE ALMOST INVISIBLE  
AS THEY GO ABOUT THEIR DUTIES,  
YET THEY MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR ME  
TO CARRY OUT MY SERVICE TO YOU.

TODAY'S GOSPEL ASKS US EXACTLY WHAT WE MEAN

WHEN WE SAY THAT "WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST."  
WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE CLAIM TO BE HIS FOLLOWERS.

OUR FAITH

WHICH IS A GIFT FROM GOD,  
IS A GIFT THAT YOU AND I ARE INVITED TO PROFESS  
AND IT CAN ONLY BE PROFESS  
IN THE LIVES THAT WE LIVE.

IT IS OUR LOVE FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

OUR DEDICATION TO THE CAUSE OF RIGHT AND JUSTICE  
OUR TAKING THE FIRST STEP TOWARD  
RECONCILIATION AND FORGIVENESS  
OUR SIMPLEST ACTS OF KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY

OUR COMING TO WEEKLY SUNDAY MASS

OUR EFFORTS TO BE STEWARDSHIP DISCIPLES

THESE ARE OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH

IN JESUS AS OUR LORD AND REDEEMER.

“AND WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?”

HOW WOULD THOSE WHO WATCH AND SEE OUR LIVES

THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH

THE FAMILY WE LOVE

ANSWER THAT QUESTION ABOUT US?