



*Who do **YOU** say that I am?*

## Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

This Sunday, the **24th Sunday in Ordinary Time**, Jesus asks, "Who do you say I am?"

All of us have heard about Jesus and each of us has some idea about him. You may remember, his "I am" statements. "I am the Bread of Life." "I am the Way." And perhaps most dramatic, "Before Abraham came to be, I am!"

These statements declare who Jesus is, that he is much more than an ordinary human being. But the question Jesus asks is personal: "Who do you say that I am?" When you approach Jesus at prayer, in the tabernacle or at Mass: Who do you, Jesus asks, who do you say that I am?

Simon Peter responds, "You are the Christ."

Jesus accepts that answer. It's not complete, but it is accurate. Jesus accepts Peter's response because it leads to his mission, the reason he came. He is the Christ, that is, the anointed one, or in Hebrew, "Messiah." He has been anointed by the Holy Spirit for a purpose.

Jesus' purpose might surprise you. It certainly surprised Peter and the other apostles. They thought of the Messiah as a triumphal figure, someone who would vindicate them in their struggle against Roman dominance. But Jesus does not see his role that way. Yes, he is the Christ, but his mission is this: "to suffer greatly...be rejected...and killed..."

When Peter hears this, he tries to dissuade Jesus. But Jesus rebukes Peter and calls him, "Satan." Strong words. The first reading tells about a man who says "I set my face like flint." That man is Jesus; he set his face toward Jerusalem even though it meant horrendous suffering.

Suffering, rejection and death - not an appealing mission. It does, however, contain a note of hope - to "rise after three days." Jesus offers that mission - with its promise - not only to the apostles but also to us. "Follow me," he says. Take up your cross and follow me.

My Brothers and Sisters, the Christian life, as Jesus makes clear, is not a matter of dreaming about great deeds. It is about taking up one's cross and following Jesus today.

Have a Blessed Week!

*Rev. Rafal Ligenza*

Pastor — St. Joseph Parish