

**FATHER MARK SCHULTE HOMILY**  
**Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)**  
**September 12, 2021**  
**“Think Like God Not Like Men”**

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At various times in the Gospel, Jesus will ask a question usually directed to His disciples. These are never rhetorical questions but are meant to have a specific purpose. Whenever we notice that Jesus has asked a question, our own attention should be triggered watching in anticipation for the purposes of the question. In this particular instance, the question to His disciples is, “Who do people say that I am?” (Mk 8:27-35)

Jesus already knows what people are saying – but He wants to hear this from His disciples and He wants them to hear what each other have to say about the question. Questions trigger dialogue and different kinds of responses.

This question regarding the identity of Jesus is a prominent one in the Gospel and many different people express their understanding in as many different ways:

- Pilate will ask Jesus, “Are you a King?” (Lk 23:3)
- His Apostles while in the boat during the storm will say, “Who is this that even the wind and sea obeys?” (Mk 4:41)
- Others will say: “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son?” (Mt 13:55)
- The Samaritan woman at the well said, “Could this not be the Messiah?” (Jn 4:29)
- Martha said: “I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the son of God.” (Jn 11:27)
- Even the devil offered his two cents worth while Jesus was in the desert: “If you are the Son of God turn these stones into bread.” (Matt 4:3)
- The blind man will say: “Jesus Son of David, have pity on me.” (Mk 10:47)
- God the Father at Jesus’ Baptism and the Transfiguration will proclaim: “This is my beloved son.” (Mt 3:17) (Mk 9:7)
- Jesus himself will say to Philip: “Philip when you see me you see the Father.” “The Father and I are one.” (Jn 14:9)

And so now Jesus addresses his Apostles specifically: “Who do people say that I am?” Peter will respond: “You are the Messiah.”

Knowing that the identity of Jesus is so crucial, we understand He cannot simply be a prophet or an ordinary man, if His disciples are to accept the various incredible statements that He makes. In this instance, He is preparing them for what must happen to Him: He must suffer much, be rejected, killed, and rise from the dead three days later.

Consider some other proclamations Jesus makes which the disciples and ourselves must be prepared to accept:

- “Unless, you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you.” (Jn 6:53-58)
- “My flesh is real food and my blood real drink.” (Jn 6:55-57)
- At the Last Supper, He will say “take this all of you and eat of it, this is my Body.” (Mt 26:26)
- “Take this all of you and drink of it, this is my blood – do this in memory of me.” (Mt 26:27)
  
- To Peter He said: “You are rock and upon this rock I will build my church – and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” (Mt 16:18)

- “Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven them.” (Jn 21:23)
- “No one comes to the Father (i.e., is saved) except through me” (Jn 14:6). This includes people of all other religions. At some point, they must encounter Christ.
- “Destroy this temple (i.e., His body) and I will raise it up in three days” (Jn 2:19).

Only a divine being can make such statements as these, Jesus is that divine being. The Apostle John confirms this in his gospel, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” Jesus is the Word.

Jesus requires his Apostles to follow in His footsteps – to imitate Him – especially in the way of suffering and the cross. How can they and us be expected to do this if they and we do not believe that Jesus is God? This is why Jesus asks them this most important question that they and we must be able to answer. **“Who is Jesus?”**

We cannot have a proper relationship with Jesus and accept all that He has said if we do not believe that He is God. The Catholic Church understands this and has defended the divinity of Jesus throughout the history of the Church. The Council of Nicea is one example. Examine the Nicene Creed. The largest part of the Nicene Creed deals with the authentic identity of Jesus. It answers that question that Jesus put to His Apostles: “Who do people say that I am?”

Over the years, many Catholics have walked away from their Catholic faith. I believe that one of, if not the principal reason, is that these Catholics did not understand and believe in the authentic identity of Jesus and, therefore, put no faith in the statements that He made. This is one reason I place so much emphasis on and repeat often – how important it is for us to know our faith.

Many who call themselves Christian today – lack the true understanding of who Jesus is and, therefore, do not believe certain statements that Jesus made – or they try to explain them away in some fashion from a human perspective. John Chapter 6 can be an example of this.

Remember what Jesus said to Peter, the Prince of the Apostles when Peter objected to what Jesus said regarding His future suffering:

- “Get behind me Satan.”
- “You are thinking not as God does
- But as human beings do.”

Therefore, think like God.

- If you wish to be saved and go to heaven,
- Then believe that Jesus is God and believe all that he said: not just those parts of scripture we choose to believe. And especially those parts that we struggle to understand.

We must strive to “put on the mind of Christ”. (Ph 2:5) (1 Cor 2:16)