

# *Ballineaspig Parish Bulletin*

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21st Sunday Ordinary Time.

23rd August, 2020

**Matt 16: 13-20**

## **Reflection**

### **“WHO DO PEOPLE SAY I AM”**

Leading politicians here and abroad assure us that they pay little attention to media inspired polls. Still they constantly do internal straw polls among their inner circles to assess what the wider public think of them. Was Jesus doing His own straw poll when he asked the disciples what people thought about who He was? Was He wondering, perhaps, how many even of them would remain loyal to Him in the tough days ahead? After all, they were on their way to Jerusalem and He was filled with foreboding. Their answers were cagey and non-committal e.g. Elijah and Jeremiah. Maybe, they were too frightened to speak up honestly and openly.

So Jesus put Peter on the spot.

“WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?”

Then came the dramatic reply

“YOU ARE THE CHRIST”

This answer must have surprised them all, even Peter himself, perhaps. How could Peter be so certain? True enough, Peter had been His companion now for many months. He had often noticed Jesus slipping away quietly to have time with the Father, in prayer. He had even been at the Transfiguration. But this moment was unique. Peter was given the inner awareness and conviction of who Jesus is that we call faith. It evoked a commitment to the Lord that remained constant even when there were human lapses through temptation and fear at Passion time. Such faith was pure gift.

Like every gift, Peter’s faith brought with it enrichment and responsibility. It deepened Peter’s knowledge of his Creator’s wonderful work and his awareness of the divine love, mercy, forgiveness and joy present for us in and through the humanity of Jesus.

The responsibilities came quickly. Peter was called to lead the disciples and the community of early believers to form the infant Church. He was to inspire these first Christians to bring the love of Jesus to the ends of the known world of their time, prepared to suffer martyrdom for the One each of them believed in. Such is the outcome of the gift of faith.



Every time we come to Eucharist, Jesus puts the same question to each of us as he did to Peter, Who do YOU say I am? By how you live? Will I accept the gift of vibrant faith with all the love, opportunities and challenging responsibilities it brings to me in my world this day?

I believe Lord; help the dormant faith I have.

Fr Tom Clancy

