

# HOMILY ~ 21st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## AUGUST 26/27, 2023

Who do you say that I am? [Get a number of answers from the congregation.] In some ways, your answer will depend upon how well you know me. If you are here at St. Edith for the first time, you will probably guess that I am a priest because of the role I am playing here and how I am dressed. You may know my name and that I am the pastor because Heather announced that in the beginning, but aside from that, you would not know much else. If you know me better, you may know that I like to sing, and that I want to be as welcoming and as non-judgmental as I possibly can. You may also know that I am deeply committed to St. Edith and have no desire to move any place else. You may also know that I highly value all of our volunteers, and I know that very little would happen without them. You may also know that I listen to people and rely on all of our organizations to help me. You may also know that I highly value our Parish and School staff. You may know that I love having the school here and am committed to Catholic School education. So, when you answer the question *“Fr. Jim, that Pastor of St. Edith Parish,”* what that means to you is highly dependent upon how well you know me.

In the Gospel Reading when Jesus asks the disciples, *“Who do people say that I am?”* they respond John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. They are giving that answer because they do not know him very well. They may have heard something about him, heard him teach or preach, or saw him perform a miracle. However, calling him a prophet, a teacher or a holy man is pretty general. Then Jesus asks his disciples, *“Who do you say that I am?”* He is asking the people who know him the best, and Peter tells him, *“You are the Christ, Son of the living God.”* Now that is really specific and divinely inspired from a man who knows Jesus well and has great faith in Jesus. Saying that Jesus is a prophet, a teacher or a holy man, most would agree with that. Even many non-Christian religions would agree with that. Saying that Jesus is God is divinely inspired and takes faith.

If Jesus came today and asked you the question, *“Who do you say that I am?”* how would you answer? Many of us would respond that Jesus is God or one of the persons of the Trinity. What that

really means would depend upon how well you know him, and I mean know him, not just know about him. I think many of our young children would know that Jesus is God from what they have learned in faith formation classes. It would have a much deeper meaning to those of us that know Jesus well.

When I answer that Jesus is God, this is what it means to me. God is the creator, the beginning of all things. God created the whole universe out of nothing and started this all in motion. God is the creator of all life. Everything that has life comes from God. We cannot even produce a seed in the laboratory that will grow. We can try to modify it, but it has to have life within it from God. Since God created all things and gave them life, he knows and understands everything better than we ever will. Why wouldn't I seek out and follow the wisdom of God? I also know that God sustains all life. Without the Holy Spirit dwelling within me, I would cease to have life. We are very complex human beings. With all of the thousands of things that could go wrong with us every day, usually they do not. We know that God watches over and protects us every moment of every day. We can put our lives in his hands because he loves us and sustains us. We can accept whatever comes into our lives because we know we can work through anything with God's help. We also believe that God is the end of all that is. We know that our time here in the world is limited; and when our time comes, we will pass on to eternal life. We can live a healthy life style, eat right, exercise, get enough sleep, and that may make us healthy and able to do all of the things we want to do; but we do not think that will necessarily extend our lives. Because we believe that Jesus is God, we have the responsibility to love and serve the people in our lives as best as we can. We need to be a witness to God in the world. We need to model the love of Jesus Christ in the world by how I relate to other people

So, how would you answer that question "*Who do you say that Jesus is?*" What exactly does this mean in your life? How does your answer to that question affect how you live your life?

Love and Peace,

Fr. Jim