

SUNDAY 21 (A) (2020)

A) INTRODUCTION

- "But you, he said, who do you say that I am?"
- Jesus puts this very important question to his disciples
- who do they think he really is?
- have they any idea?
- but he does not ask them that question straight away

B) WHO DO PEOPLE SAY THE SON OF MAN IS?

- First he asks the disciples what others are saying about him, and they report the rumours.
- by his preaching and his miracles, Jesus was calling to mind the tradition of the Old Testament prophets.
- he speaks out, he challenges the religious authorities of the time, he speaks in God's name, and he calls to repentance
- just like Jeremiah, Elijah, and, most recently of all, John the Baptist
- and he backs up his words with wonderful deeds - the miracles.
- So the people believe he is a prophet.

C) BUT YOU, WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM? (**to disciples**)

- And then Jesus puts the question directly to the disciples
- They are his chosen friends, they have spent more time with him, can they go a step further?
- Simon Peter speaks up for them all, as he so often does:
- "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- Here he brings together two titles or attributes:
- One is the **Christ**, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the special Servant of God, foretold by Isaiah and the other prophets.
- The other attribute is that Jesus is **divine**, the **Son of the Living God**
- and this is something the disciples as a whole only came to realise after Jesus had risen from the dead.
- For the Christian community that Matthew was writing for, and for us too, these words of Peter form a cornerstone of our faith.
- We too believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One and, more than that, that he is truly God-made-man.
- That is what makes us Christians.

D) WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM? (to us)

- Jesus challenges us today in the same way as he did his own disciples: who do you and I say that he is?
- Our response is very important, and it has to come from our hearts, as well as our heads.
- If we really do believe that he is God made man, then we can also believe his teachings and his message:
- not only the commandments, but what underlies them, namely, God's unchanging, unlimited and unconditional love for each one of us, a love which Jesus personifies and makes visible for us
- We are able to give a notional assent to these ideas, to accept them in our heads
- but, much more importantly, we are also able to respond in kind, to respond with our hearts;
- we are able to love him in return, and to commit ourselves and our lives to him.

E) GOD WITH US

- if we really do believe that Jesus is God, then something else follows, which, for me, is very consoling
- it is the fact that in Jesus, God is with us
- that is what we celebrate at Christmas
- God is with us in Jesus of Nazareth who lived among us 2000 years ago
- If we want to know what God is like, we can get some idea from the words and actions of Jesus as they are recorded in the Gospels
- But God is with us still through his church
- He is with us in the Holy Eucharist to be our life and food
- He is with us in each of the Sacraments,
- dwelling within us in Baptism,
- forgiving us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation,
- strengthening us in Confirmation and in Marriage and Holy orders,
- coming close to us in times of illness through the Anointing of the Sick
- he is present to us in the intimacy of our hearts in our times of personal prayer
- he is present to us through other people, especially when two or three are gathered in his name
- present too in all those different ways in which our lives are touched by people and by events
- God is with us
- There is a short prayer which the priest says quietly as he is preparing the gifts at the altar
- a wonderful prayer which sums up our whole life as Christians
- By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. Amen.