

Lenten Reflection

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When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Mt. 16: 13-14)

Is there a "right answer" to Jesus' question to His disciples in today's Gospel? We heard their answers to who "others" thought He was. But the part of this conversation that seems so much deeper and more personal is, "But who do **you** say that I am?" It seems He is saying, "You've been with me all this time, you are special to me, so what do I mean to **you**?" From Jesus' response to Peter it seems that "You are the Christ the Son of the Living God" was the right answer. Upon reflection, perhaps that is just the *beginning* of the answer that will take on deeper and deeper meaning through relationship.

During Lent our focus is geared to conversion -- to changing our hearts and becoming more like Christ. If we had only one understanding of who Christ is, our own conversion would be limited to one Lenten experience. Knowing and embracing the identity of Christ is a life-long journey. We are called each day through our own growing relationship with Him to answer the question, "Who do *I* say that Jesus is?" Perhaps the focus is on more than Christ's identity; perhaps the answer is intertwined with our own identity as well. Have we come to know the human person of Christ and His message well enough to emulate Him in our everyday lives? An un-authored quote that was posted on social media stated, "Your life as Christians should make non-believers question their disbelief in God." Our mission is to be Christ to others. His identity must become our own.

As we pray for the grace to change our hearts and minds to be more like Christ, let us become accountable for a lifetime of becoming more and more aware of 'who He is' through prayer, study, and scripture. Then, as we embrace and internalize our own Christ-identity, we will be His presence in the world.

Let us daily hear Christ's words to us, "Who do you say that I am?" When we answer that question, we identify Christ, and we also reveal the answer of our own identity.