

Twenty First Sunday of Ordinary Time 2020

My beloved brothers and sisters, the most important question we shall ever be asked and that we will all answer, even at the moment of our death is: “Who do you say that I am?” The way that we answer that question will determine how we live our lives, and how we will live in eternity.

In the first reading we see the contrast between the faithful steward of the King, who is entrusted with the King’s authority to rule in his name; and from whom everything becomes stripped away because he fails to rule rightly in the name of the King due to his infidelity. The steward who was appointed by the king has failed to remember that it is the King who is truly in charge. This reading was the basis of the Lord’s handing over of the keys of His Kingdom to Peter, and to the apostles and their successors.

In the second reading, St. Paul reminds us of the responsibility that has been entrusted to him; for he and the apostles and their successors have been entrusted with the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. Paul reminds us that the Church must faithfully watch over this treasure, the treasure is called by the Church: the Deposit of Faith- we don’t get to make it up as we go along, nor water it down because it does not seem to fit the present demands and paradigms of the society in which we now live. Our treasure is the truth about God, about who Our Lord and King is, and about what He said and did, and about the way we are to live which will bring about holiness and happiness in our lives and in the world!

In the Gospel, Jesus and His disciples are at Caesarea Philippi. This is the mouth of the Jordan River, which runs out of a cave which was also a hot spring. It was believed by the pagans to be the mouth of hades, the abode of the dead. It smelled like hell! Jesus is dealing with the gossip and the rumors that are being shared about Himself and His ministry in the world. Many were saying that Jesus was just a prophet, and not only just a prophet, but one of the old prophets come back from the dead; therefore, their rumors were diminishing the truth about Jesus’ and His teaching. If He is just a ghost of a prophet, then ghosts aren’t real, there not substantial, and therefore, one does not have to take them seriously!

Jesus wants His closest friends and disciples to be very, very clear about Who He is! Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, speaks the truth about the reality of Jesus: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!” It is for this simple reason that Jesus makes Peter the Head of His Church, the Steward of His mysteries and His authority! This was the work of God, not Peter’s sleuthing and deduction!

Finally, Jesus teaches us that not even the gates of Hell would prevail against this Truth and His Kingdom, because Jesus has founded His Church upon the Rock of the Faith that Peter has just professed. This Rock will never falter; therefore, Jesus asks each of us today: “Who do you say that I am?”, am I, and all that I teach you and promise you, the Rock of your faith?