

## Twenty Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

My beloved brothers and sisters, all of you who are married and who have children know, that there is a profound difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is a simple biological function of sound impacting upon our eardrums and registering on our brains. Listening means receiving what we have heard, and acting upon it. Listening requires a decision on our part. All of us by our Baptisms have received the gift of faith, by which the Lord Jesus Christ has opened the ears of our spiritual hearing to hear and listen to His Divine Word, but we must make the decision to act upon it!

St. Peter proclaims that Jesus is Lord and Savior, sent by God to redeem the world; He is the Son of God made a man, and Jesus does not contradict him, but also teaches the fuller meaning of what Peter has just confirmed. Jesus teaches that He is the Suffering Servant, who will redeem the world by His suffering unto death for the People of God!

This is the Eternal claim of Jesus, which makes an eternal claim on each one of us. There are many today, who acknowledge that Jesus Christ was a great philosopher, a great teacher, and others who claim He was a great lunatic. The way we answer Jesus' question is the most important question we will ever face in this life and in the next! Either Jesus is Lord, Savior and Master of the universe and of our lives, or He is not; that is the equation.

Jesus asks two questions of His disciples: "Who do others say that I am?"; and "Who do you say that I am?" The first question is merely academic, it is a philosophical question; and, He will make no difference in our lives! However, the second question is not academic, our very eternities depend upon it! The present crises in the Church is resultant upon it. The present crises in the Church is the result of many who have made the identity of Christ, merely an academic exercise, and so Jesus has never become Lord in fact over the whole of their lives, Who is constantly calling us all to radical conversion! To regard Jesus in a merely superficial way, is to have a merely superficial relationship with Him, instead of the deep intimacy with Him Who is God and savior. This superficial relationship with Jesus, prevents Him from invading our personal space, but, Christ's Kingdom

does not operate in this way. Jesus wants a personal intimacy with us. We cannot say that Jesus is Lord, our way; rather, Jesus must be the Lord, in His way, and His way is always the way of the Cross! It is the way of self-denial, dying to ourselves and our selfishness. Peter wanted a Savior and Lord without the Cross; and Jesus makes it very clear that is the way of Satan; it is not the way of Jesus. Jesus' way always calls us to take personal responsibility to His call to lifelong conversion and conformity to His Person, and this is what makes us truly Christians in fact, and not just in name! The call to each of us today, and today the Church, is to follow the Way of Jesus and reject the way of the world!