

Fr. Martin's Reflection – August 27, 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Our gospel this week, Mt 16:13-20, deals with the question of faith, who do we say Jesus is? Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" This question prompts various responses, reflecting the prevailing opinions about Jesus at the time. However, Jesus then directs the question to his disciples personally, asking, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?"

Peter's response, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," serves as a profound confession of faith. Jesus acknowledges the divine revelation behind Peter's statement, declaring that this insight was not born of human reasoning but was revealed to him by God. Through this interaction, Jesus establishes the foundation of his Church, symbolizing Peter as the rock upon which it will be built.

The imagery of the "keys to the kingdom of heaven" and the authority to bind and loose signifies a significant responsibility given to Peter. This passage has theological implications for the establishment of the papacy and the authority of the Church. It emphasizes the divine origin of the Church and the role of Peter as its leader.

The gospel passage also highlights the importance of personal revelation and faith. The disciples' varied responses to Jesus' initial question reflect the diverse ways people perceive him even today. The passage challenges us to reflect on our own understanding of Jesus' identity and our level of commitment to our faith.

In a broader sense, this passage highlights the significance of understanding and recognizing Jesus' true nature. It prompts believers to declare their faith openly, just as Peter did, and to recognize that faith is a gift from God. Additionally, it invites reflection on the relationship between human insight and divine revelation, illustrating that authentic faith is grounded in the acknowledgement of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God.

Matthew 16:13-20 is a transformative passage that captures a pivotal moment in Jesus' ministry. It serves as a foundation for understanding the establishment of the Church and the authority given to Peter. Beyond its historical and theological implications, the passage invites us to reflect on our own understanding of Jesus' identity and our personal declaration of faith.

May you acknowledge Jesus as your savior every day. Have a blessed week.

Fr. Martin