

Sunday 21st (A) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 16,13-20): Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi. He asked his disciples, «What do people say of the Son of Man? Who do they say I am?». They said, «For some of them you are John the Baptist, for others Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets». Jesus asked them, «But you, who do you say I am?». Peter answered, «You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God». Jesus replied, «It is well for you, Simon Barjona, for it is not flesh or blood that has revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. And now I say to you: You are Peter (or Rock) and on this rock I will build my Church; and never will the powers of death overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what you unbind on earth shall be unbound in heaven». Then He ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

«What do people say of the Son of Man? Who do they say I am?»

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Today, Peter's profession of faith at Caesarea Phillippi opens the last stage of the public ministry of Jesus and prepares us for the supreme occurrence of His death and resurrection. After the multiplication of breads and fishes, Jesus decides to retire with the apostles for a while to deepen in their formation; in them, the Church, seed of the Kingdom of God sown in us, starts becoming visible.

Two Sundays ago, when we were watching Peter walking on the sea and beginning to sink, we saw Jesus reprimand him: «You of little faith! Why did you doubt?» (Mt 14:31). Today, the scolding is changed to praise: «It is well for you, Simon Barjona» (Mt 16:17). Lucky of Peter because he has managed to open his heart to the divine revelation and has recognized in Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Savior. Throughout history, the same questions have been asked time and again: «What do

people say of the Son of Man? (...). But you, who do you say I am?» (Mt 16:13-15). At one time or other, we also have had to explain who is Jesus for me and what do I recognize in Him; through the faith received from testimonies (parents, catechists, priests, teachers, friends...) we have moved into a personalized faith in Jesus Christ, which we also have become testimonies of, because this is what the essential core of Christian vocation consists of.

Only from our faith and communion in Jesus Christ shall we prevail over the power of evil. The Kingdom of Death is manifested amongst us, it makes us suffer and opens up many question marks; but, at the same time, the Kingdom of God is also made available to us and it unveils the hope; and the Church, sacrament of the Kingdom of God in the world, built on the rock of the faith Peter confessed, allows us to expect the hope and the joy of eternal life. While mankind lives in this world, we shall have to bestow hope, and while it may be necessary to impart hope, the Church's mission will be necessary; this is why. the gates of the Kingdom of Death will never overcome it, as Christ, quite present amidst his people, guaranteed us (cf. Mt 16:18).