

... WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

Today, on this Sunday, we are invited to examine our faith...

Jesus' first question—"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"—tests the disciples' knowledge. It is enough simply to repeat what one hears: rumors, opinions, common ideas. It is an external answer that neither commits one's life nor demands personal adherence. But Jesus takes a decisive step and poses a new question to his disciples: "And you, who do you say that I am?" Here, everything changes: the question becomes personal and direct. No one can follow Jesus without facing it sincerely.

Now, let us apply this question to our own lives: Who is Jesus to me? What place does He hold in my life?

The true answer will be given through our lives rather than our lips.

For at times we may say, "Jesus is my Lord," yet have no time for Him because of work, pleasure, or the pursuit of power.

When we displace the Lord from the center of our hearts and lives, we easily surrender that place to false idols.

In God, we find freedom; in idols, conversely, we find slavery.

When we worship money, we end up doing whatever money demands of us. When our idol is our own image, we sacrifice our time and our truth to maintain agonizing masks.

When my happiness depends on the opinions of others, I lose the capacity to be free and to do good.

We might ask ourselves now: what kind of person do we want to be?

In God, we find our peace and our freedom.

That is why, when faced with Jesus' question—"And you, who do you say that I am?"—the answer, while individual, must be given with the support of a community, a great family: our Catholic Church.

In this regard, someone might insult us at some point, and we let it slide; yet if they insult our family, we respond with firmness and courage. Nowadays, it is fashionable to insult the Church, yet we remain silent.

We hear statements such as: "I believe in God, but I do not believe in the Church."

"I believe in God, but I do not believe in any organization telling me what to do."

In the face of such statements, let us listen to the voice of Jesus; He gives us the answer.

"You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church."

He appoints Peter—an imperfect, weak, and sinful man—as its head and grants him authority over the Church; this is symbolized by the keys Jesus entrusts to him.

That is why our faith—and the response we offer regarding Jesus—must not depend on the weaknesses or sins we find within the Church. Our faith does not depend on Judas, who betrayed our Master, nor on Peter, who denied Him. Our faith rests entirely in Jesus.

If we see only the errors and shortcomings of our Church, we create a caricature of it; we fail to discover it as the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Church is a living organism, not merely an organization. If one of its members is missing, the Church is incomplete and suffers.

The Church is a community of the baptized who, despite our sins and errors, desire to walk with Jesus toward eternal life. We come to the Church not because we are saints, but precisely because we are not—and because we need divine help and intervention.

May our response this Sunday—and throughout our lives—be: "I believe, Lord Jesus, that You are the Son of God and that You founded Your Church to give me a community of brothers and sisters; walking in hope, we know that You always walk with us."

May the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and our Mother, continue to guide us on this journey of faith. Amen.