

Sermon

- ◆ **First Reading:** *Isaiah 22: 19-23*
- ◆ **Second Reading:** *Romans 8:33-36*
- ◆ **Gospel:** *Matthew 16: 13-20*

Who is Boris Johnson?, he's the present prime minister of this country ; who is Francisco Bergoglio? He's our present pope! Who is Alex Ferguson? He's the former manager of Manchester United, so we have a prime minister, a pope and a former football team manager, but do we actually know WHO they are apart from their names and responsibilities past or present?, interesting! Most likely the only ones who know the above named are the people who have worked along side them or have lived with them ; there are sayings "if you want to know me, then come and live with me" or "come and work with me, and then you'll see WHO I am", indeed a risky business!! ; after getting to know another person, an obvious question arises "Do I believe in this person whom I have gotten to know, say, at home, in the workplace, at school, the next door neighbour...whoever??" and what if when I get to know such people and realize that I really don't believe in them?? For many happily married people they admit, after many years of wedlock, "gosh! I'm still discovering more wonderful good things about my spouse, I knew I married the right person!" as opposed to those who have married a "street-angel & a house-devil", thank God for those laws on domestic abuse, badly needed even more so during the Lockdown...

In to-day's Gospel reading Jesus asks the disciples about how the people have perceived him **WHO DO PEOPLE SAY THE SON OF MAN IS??** he gets a mix-up-of-an-identity response **SOME SAY YOU ARE JOHN the BAPTIST...ELIJAH...JEREMIAH or ONE OF THE PROPHETS OF OLD** ; all wrong!! Then Jesus asks the same question to his own disciples **BUT YOU** he said **WHO DO YOU SAY I AM ?**

Surprisingly only one of them spoke up, it was Peter **YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD** ; that was a happy moment for Jesus, at least one of his disciples knew WHO Jesus was.

The same question may be asked to you and me, WHO IS(was) this man Jesus? You can get baptized, be reared as a catholic, receive your first Confession & Communion, then go on and be confirmed in your religion but NEVER GET TO KNOW GOD!, is it any wonder why so many leave the practice of their religion along the way?? A man can go thru' 7 years of training to become a priest, do well in his seminary exams, get ordained and settle into a parish, and still may not have discovered WHO the Son of Man is in his own life as an individual ; the Son of Man is of course Jesus the Saviour, the bearer of the Message of Life ; or how many of us think that all-is-ready for Judgement Day just because "I go to Mass and stay out of trouble" well n' good!, to know your religion is one thing, but to know WHO JESUS IS, that's far more rewarding, far more spiritually up-lifting!

So how do we get to know WHO Jesus is?, that's the same as asking

How do I get to know God as a real person in my life? it's not so complicated ; how did you get to know WHO your best friend is? remember all the time you spent with that friend!, both of you chatted and listened to each other, you listened with your heart, you gave each other plenty of time, you woke up one morning and realized "Gosh! I have a real friend, I know him/her so well, I can say anything to him/her in total trust.." ; Then the more you remain in contact with that friend, the more the friendship will grow, friendships are a blessing to be enjoyed ;

Just like our friendship with the Lord-of-life, it is to be enjoyed, is there something stopping you from entering into constant prayer with Our Lord? Is it that you don't trust Him enough? Or have you set down your own conditions for divine friendship? One great source in getting to know WHO He is, is to read Holy Scripture, especially the 4 Gospels, see how well he got on with the most humble of people of his time, he is not far removed from broken humanity, he ended up a broken man himself ;

So WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS THE SAVIOUR IS? FOR YOU?? Wouldn't be a great pity to leave this world without having gone the extra mile in getting to discover God? If our higher aspiration is to reach Heaven, then here, now, to-day is the best time in getting to know WHO he is, then there's that very uplifting definition **GOD IS A DISCOVERY WITHOUT END** ; go for it while you have the opportunity, the rest of your life!!

I'll leave you with possibly the greatest invitation to divine friendship

It's where Our Lord says **COME TO ME ALL YOU WHO LABOUR AND ARE OVERBURDENED, I WILL GIVE YOU REST, SHOULDERS MY YOKE AND LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE IN HEART, YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS ; YES, MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.....__**

This weekend please also pray for those who live in rented accommodation and may have fallen behind in their payments due to the Lockdown and have lost their jobs ; the 3 month ban on evictions will finish this Monday, 24th August ; pray that the ban may be extended for a further 6 months ; this is a dreadful time for these very vulnerable people, let's not forget them.....God bless, stay healthy...

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