

He asked them,
 “But who do you say that I am?”
 Peter said to him in reply,
 “You are the Christ.”

- Mark 8

Sixth Week of Ordinary Time: May 11-17, 2008

Pentecost Sunday & The Sixth Week of Ordinary Time

The Easter Season ends with **Pentecost Sunday**, as the readings and the whole Church celebrate the coming and ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit among us. Jesus breathes on his jittery followers and tells them, "Peace be with you" and fills them with courage.

Now the Church Calendar returns to **Ordinary Time**, which will carry us through the rest of the year until Advent begins a new Liturgical year. The next two Sundays offer beautiful celebrations that follow **Pentecost**, including the **Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity** next week and the **Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ** the Sunday after that.

Wednesday of this week is the **Feast of Saint Matthias, Apostle** with its own special readings.

The first reading for the next two weeks is from **James**. It begins with instruction for living our lives in Christ. "Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?"

In **Mark's Gospel** the Pharisees are asking for a sign of Jesus' authenticity. Jesus warns his disciples not to be as unbelieving as the Pharisees in the face of the signs he has given them. When Jesus asks, "Who do you say I am?" Peter says he is the Messiah. Jesus tells them to tell this to no one, because this isn't the full answer. Jesus tells them about his passion and death and resurrection. Peter rebukes Jesus for talking like this. Jesus rebukes Peter and begins to heal his disciples' blindness by teaching them the meaning of their discipleship: they, too, must carry their cross. To prepare them for the scandal of the cross Jesus lets Peter, James and John see his glory.

On Sunday, the **Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity** offers us a chance to reflect on the personal richness of our faith. We read from the **Book of**

Daily Prayer This Week

This is a wonderful week to let ourselves really hear Jesus how invites us into peace in our lives. On Pentecost the Spirit comes to the disciples - the same Spirit that comes to us.

Also this week, we can ask us the question: "Who do you say I am?" This question can come to us this week in a variety of forms. We can hear him ask, "Who am I in your life? What do I mean to you? Do you believe in my love for you? Do you live as though you place all of your trust in me?" This kind of self-knowledge always takes grace, so we can ask each day this week to be more and more honest this week. We can ask to get beyond the denial we sometimes operate out of. Each morning, when we get up, while washing up or dressing, and during several "background" times in our day - driving, shopping, doing wash, walking to a meeting, feeding a baby - we can be in brief conversations with our Lord, always asking for graces.

"Help me to honestly know, Lord, what really is at the center of my life. What really motivates me? What do I turn to for energy, inspiration, approval, escape? How would the people who know me well answer these questions, Lord? Help me be honest this week." "Lord, I have just recognized how much possessions or honors really motivate me." "My Lord, I can see how fear, and avoiding pain have such power in my life." "Lord, I'm so impatient; it seems I have such a hard time simply carrying any cross."

It is quite likely that we might find it difficult to keep this kind of self-examining focus during the week, or that we might so get into self-recrimination that we can lose sight of God's love. It is the very love Jesus offers us, even when we can't recognize him or don't feel we are worthy to accept his love.

But he returns to us over and over, offering

Exodus of Moses meeting his Lord face to face. In **John's Gospel** the three lines of the Gospel poetically summarize our faith. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."

us his Spirit as a strength and love right here in our lives each day. When we feel weak we can remember that he comes to forgive us and heal us. All week, every night, let us give thanks and praise for his faithful love for us.