

AUGUST 23, 2020 -21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” This question applies to us also. Jesus is asking us the same question, “Who do you say that I am?” How would you like to answer? We may answer what we learned in the catechism class or what others have said.

The disciples were good at answering of the question, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is.” But at the question of “who do you say that I am,” they couldn’t give an answer immediately. What’s the difference of these two questions? Is it easier for us to say about the belief of others than ours? It’s not easy for us to profess our belief without real life experience.

Peter answered that “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” It was a good answer. But he didn’t fully understand what it really meant. He didn’t experience the grace of suffering yet. Therefore he denied Jesus three times before others. His profession was imperfect. Nevertheless he kept following Jesus until he died.

Here we may think about two things. Firstly, we don’t need to be perfect to be accepted by God. God will make us perfect. Only one thing we need. It is to bring ourselves to God as we are imperfect.

Secondly, Jesus didn’t place any condition on his decision that he would build his church upon Peter. He didn’t say “if you change”, “if you repent”. Without any conditions Jesus promised Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Peter’s imperfection was not an obstacle. Jesus just wanted Peter to have a will to follow him, and the will to get up again after he falls.

We are a gathering of people who are imperfect in our belief like the disciples. However, we are the Church on which Jesus is building the kingdom of God. We are the community of Jesus’ love. In this Church, our love should be unconditional just as Jesus’ love was. Jesus doesn’t place any condition for accepting us. We should do the same, when we accept and love others. Jesus will make up for all our imperfection.

Fr. James