

*Ordinary Time 21A 2014*

***“Flesh and Blood Has Not Revealed This to You”***

What makes us Christian? What defines us as Catholic? What is most central and important to our faith—that without which we are no longer Catholic, no longer Christian? The answer to these questions is given in today’s Gospel. Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do you say that I am,” and Peter responds, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Peter’s confession is the essence of our Catholic faith. We are Catholic and Christian because we confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus is the Christ; that is, he is the long-expected Messiah for whom the people of Israel waited and hoped. Jesus is the Messiah, the one whom God sent into the world to save and redeem us. Jesus is the Christ, the one whom God anointed with his own Spirit so that we might become God’s People.

Jesus the Christ is the Son of God, the one whom the Father sent into the world to reveal what he has seen and heard in God’s presence. Jesus is truly human, but he is also the Son of God: God from God, light from light. To hear his words is to hear the Word of God; to see his face is to see the face of God. To confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is to enter into eternal life.

We are Christians because we believe that Jesus is more than a prophet or holy man; he is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. We are Catholic because we believe that the words of Jesus are the words of God.

Our faith is a gift from God. This is why Jesus says to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.” Peter did not discover that Jesus is the Son of God; it was revealed to him by God. In a moment of sheer grace, the living God revealed that Jesus is his beloved Son, the long awaited Messiah.

Our own faith, you see, is a gift. We confess that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God through the power of God’s Spirit at work in our lives. Through the power of God’s Spirit, we begin to confess that Jesus is not simply a figure of the past, a holy man, a prophet, a sage. We proclaim that he is risen and alive, more present to us than we are to ourselves. We confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And because we believe that Jesus is the Son of God we, gather to celebrate this Eucharist in which we are in communion with the risen Lord.

For me, Jesus is not merely a figure of the past; he is living presence. He is risen and alive for me, and I experience his presence every day. This is why I am a Christian; this is why I am Catholic: because I believe that Jesus is the Son of the living God. And it is this faith that makes all the difference.