

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, August 27, 2023
Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle A

Who do you say that I am?

Martin Luther has this commentary and reflection:

“The life of Christianity consists of possessive pronouns.”

“It is one thing to say, “Christ is a Savior; it is quite another thing to say, “Christ is MY Savior and MY Lord.” The devil can say the first; the true Christian alone can say the second.

We heard in today’s gospel reading Peter’s proclamation of Jesus:

“You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God”. With these words, Peter is not just telling us the title of Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior, the Son of the Living God. Peter is also confessing his need for redemption and salvation. We must be able to make the same confession of faith in Jesus. However, it is not enough to say, Jesus is the Lord and Savior. Our confession must consist of possessive pronouns:

Jesus is MY Messiah, MY Savior, MY Redeemer.

Our profession of faith in Jesus as *our* Messiah, *our* Savior, must also be a confession and admission of our need for salvation that without God we don’t have the privilege to enjoy the promise of eternal life.

Allow me to pose a question: What kind of Messiah do you want Jesus to be? More often than not we are not on the same page with Jesus – our agenda is different from his most of the time. What we dream of and hope for is not the same as what he has promised us and works by grace to deliver to us. Perhaps many of us struggle with

disappointment with God because, at street level in our daily lives, we do not esteem what God values. We blame God sometimes because he doesn't answer us the way that we want. We do not treasure the ways God is saving us. As Paul David Tripp puts it: "Many of us want nothing more than a Prozac Jesus, who will make us feel better and make our lives easier." In light of this, I think it is just fair to ask: Do you really want the redemption and salvation that Jesus offers you? Is it really redemption that you want from our Savior?

Let me put these questions in context:

Perhaps many of us want *control* more than we want redemption and salvation.

We wish we had more control over people – having great influence on their thoughts and feelings, on their behaviors and attitudes. We wish we have more control over the circumstances of our lives. That would be "the good life" for us.

Perhaps many of us crave *success* more than we crave redemption and salvation.

Many are willing to do almost anything to be successful. Meanwhile we neglect what God says has eternal value.

Perhaps many of us want *acceptance* more than we want redemption and salvation.

We find more happiness in the acceptance and attention of the people around us than we do in the abounding love of God. What others think of us. What others say about us seems to be more important to us than God's loving acceptance of us.

None of these things are bad in themselves. It is not wrong to desire any of them. The question is: **What set of desires rules my heart?**

This is important because the desires that rule our heart determine how we evaluate our life, how we make small and big decisions, and, most importantly, how we think about the goodness and faithfulness of God.

The desires of our heart show whether we long for Jesus' redemption or not.

Again, our profession of faith in Jesus as *our* Messiah, *our* Savior, must be also a confession of our need for salvation.

We must let Jesus Christ, our Messiah, save us in every way. So that like Peter we can also truly say, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."