



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS *ANGELUS* Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 23 August 2020 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

This Sunday's Gospel reading (cf. Mt 16:13-20) presents the moment in which Peter professes his faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. This Apostle's confession is provoked by Jesus himself, who wishes to lead his disciples to take the decisive step in their relationship with him. Indeed, Jesus' entire journey with those who follow him, especially with the Twelve, is a journey of educating their faith. First of all, he asks: "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" (v. 13). The Apostles liked to talk about people, as we all do. We like to gossip. Speaking about others is not so demanding; this is why we like it; even 'flaying' others. In this case the perspective of faith rather than gossip is already required, and so he asks, 'What do the people say that I am?'. And the disciples seem to compete in reporting the different opinions, which perhaps, to a large extent, they themselves shared. They too shared them. In essence, Jesus of Nazareth was considered a prophet (v. 14).

With the second question, Jesus touches them to the core: "But who do you say that I am?" (v. 15). At this point, we seem to perceive a moment of silence, as each one of those present is called to put themselves on the line, manifesting the reason why they follow Jesus; therefore a certain hesitation is more than legitimate. Even if I were to ask you now, 'For you, who is Jesus?', there would be a little hesitation. Simon takes them off the hook by declaring forthrightly, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). This answer, so complete and luminous, does not come from an impulse of his own, however generous — Peter was generous — but rather it is the fruit of a particular grace of the heavenly Father. Indeed, Jesus himself says to him: "flesh and blood has not revealed this to you" — that is, culture, what you have studied, no, this has not revealed it to you. It was revealed to you by "my Father who is in heaven" (v. 17). To confess Jesus is a grace of the Father. To say that Jesus is the Son of the living God, that he is the Redeemer, is a grace that we must ask for: "Father, give me the grace to confess Jesus".

At the same time, the Lord acknowledges Simon's prompt response to the inspiration of grace and

therefore adds, in a solemn tone, “you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it” (v. 18). With this affirmation, Jesus makes Simon understand the meaning of the new name He has given him, ‘Peter’: the faith he has just shown is the unshakeable ‘rock’ on which the Son of God wishes to build his Church, that is, the Community. And the Church goes forward always on the basis of Peter’s faith, that faith that Jesus recognizes [in Peter] and which makes him the head of the Church.

Today, we hear Jesus’ question directed to each one of us: ‘And you, who do you say I am?’. To each one of us. And each one of us must give not a theoretical answer, but one that involves faith, that is, life, because faith is life! ‘For me you are ...’ and then to confess Jesus. An answer that demands from us too, as from the first disciples, inward listening to the voice of the Father and consonance with what the Church, gathered around Peter, continues to proclaim. It is a matter of understanding who Christ is for us: whether he is the centre of our life, whether he is the goal of our commitment in the Church, of our commitment in society. Who is Jesus Christ for me? Who is Jesus Christ for you, for you, for you ...? An answer that we should give every day.

But beware: it is indispensable and praiseworthy that the pastoral care of our communities be open to the many forms of poverty and plights that are everywhere. Charity is always the high road of the journey of faith, of the perfection of faith. But it is necessary that works of solidarity, the works of charity that we carry out, not divert us from contact with the Lord Jesus. Christian charity is not simple philanthropy but, on the one hand, it is looking at others through the very eyes of Jesus and, on the other hand, it is seeing Jesus in the face of the poor. This is the true path of Christian charity, with Jesus at the centre, always. May Mary Most Holy, blessed because she believed, be our guide and model on the path of faith in Christ, and make us aware that trust in him gives full meaning to our charity and to all our existence.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, yesterday, the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief was observed. Let us pray for these, our brothers and sisters, and let us sustain with our prayer and solidarity also those — and there are many — who even today are persecuted because of their faith and religion. There are many!

Tomorrow, 24 August, is the 10th anniversary of the massacre of 72 migrants in San Fernando, in Tamaulipas, Mexico. They were people from various countries who were looking for a better life. I express my solidarity with the families of the victims who today are still asking for justice and the truth about what happened. The Lord will hold us to account for all of the migrants who have fallen on their journey of hope. They were victims of the throw-away culture.

Tomorrow also marks four years since the earthquake that hit Central Italy. I renew my prayer for

the families and the communities who suffered the greatest losses, that they may go ahead in solidarity and hope, and I hope that the reconstruction might accelerate so that the people might return to live serenely in this beautiful territory of the Apennines.

I also wish to emphasize my closeness to the people of Cabo Delgado in the north of Mozambique who are suffering because of international terrorism. I do so with the vivid recollection of [my visit to that country](#) about a year ago.

I extend a cordial greeting to you all, Romans and pilgrims; in particular to the young people of the parish of Cernusco sul Naviglio — those who are in yellow over there — they departed from Siena by bicycle and they arrived in Rome today along the Via Francigena. You have been very good! And I also greet the group of families from Carobbo degli Angeli (province of Bergamo), who have come here on a pilgrimage in memory of the victims of the coronavirus. And let us not forget, let us not forget the victims of the coronavirus. This morning I heard the testimony of a family who lost their grandparents without being able to say goodbye to them, on the same day. So much suffering, so many people who lost their lives, victims of this disease; and so many volunteers, doctors, nurses, nuns, priests, who also lost their lives. Let us remember the families who have suffered because of this.

And I wish you all a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.

Arrivederci!