

# *Trinity News*

## **Pentecost 16 The Humanity of Christ and our Humanity in the Gospels**

The question of Jesus to his disciples in the crucial happening at Caesarea Philippi in the north of Israel stands out in the report of it at Mark 8:27-28. "Who do you say that I am?"

We dwell on Peter's reply because it is central to Christian teaching and the beliefs that inspire the teaching: "You are the Messiah, the son of the living God."

But Jesus is not only asking about the Spirit within him and his divine connection. He wants to know what they really think about him as a person. We also cannot escape that key human question, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter could have said many things in response, just as we could say many words of praise for someone that we really care about.

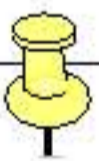
Peter not only loved Jesus as a friend and as the Master Teacher that he followed. He also stood in awe of him. His denials about knowing Jesus at his trial demonstrate that he could also drop his awe of Jesus in favour of seeing him just as another vulnerable man caught in the web of fear that crushes the courage out of us all too often.

Peter didn't speak to comfort Jesus. He spoke to comfort himself. What he saw and heard and sensed in front of him could not be covered by normal discourse. This was outside all frames of reference, even the reference to Messiah in Israel. The one who came was like no other expectation of the Messiah. This is the Beloved One, the one we are always waiting for without being able to say why or when. We cannot shake the expectation, because in one of our deepest instincts we know that we do not really know its outcomes, one of our rare moments of intellectual humility. "We may not know, we cannot tell what pains he had to bear, but we believe it was for us he hung and suffered there" says the hymn. The scene at the Cross is seared into our memory and yet we know so little of the finer details there or in this incident at Caesarea Philippi. We know very little of the total conversation that day when Jesus was finally acknowledged as the real Messiah by those who had been with him on the tracks and byways of Galilee.

Will anyone ever know who they really are? We may direct Christ's question to others about ourselves and not be happy with the answers. As someone who has had opportunity to listen to more people than most, I am still surprised at how little we know about one another. There is so much hidden away from our perception in every person. Sometimes the Church gets it right when it baptises or confirms or ordains someone. It is a great act of trust to commission anyone in any form of ministry. It is a great act of trust to enter a marriage or to take on a position that we are somewhat afraid of and yet we feel we must do it.

It is an act of trust and courage to live every day and put ourselves in our own hands and in the hands of others. It is a great act of trust to see who we are and to be unafraid to do so without being brash in any way. Brashness wins few friends. Christ dared to ask questions about himself and to live with the consequences. **The toughest questions we ask ourselves are not driven by fear or anxiety or the need to be like someone else. They driven by human need at its finest point to really know who we are and the consequences of daring to ask the questions linked to the ultimate boundaries of our person and existence.** When we look into the face of Christ we have to answer his questions about how we see him and to ask him the question about how he sees us. His gifts of perception were no doubt sometimes a burden to him as they are to any perceptive person. Such insights are always given to help, not to hinder. We are bidden by our Faith and Life itself to lay ourselves on the line in our care of others and to take the risks that are necessary in order to really love them as Christ loves us.

**Bishop Arthur Jones**



**THIS WEEK:**

**Wednesday.**

- Bible study, 10:00am.
- Group Discussion, 7:30pm, Parish Office

**Thursday.**

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel.

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:**

Wisdom 1:16-2:1, 12-22  
Psalm 54  
James 3:16-4:6  
Mark 9:30-37