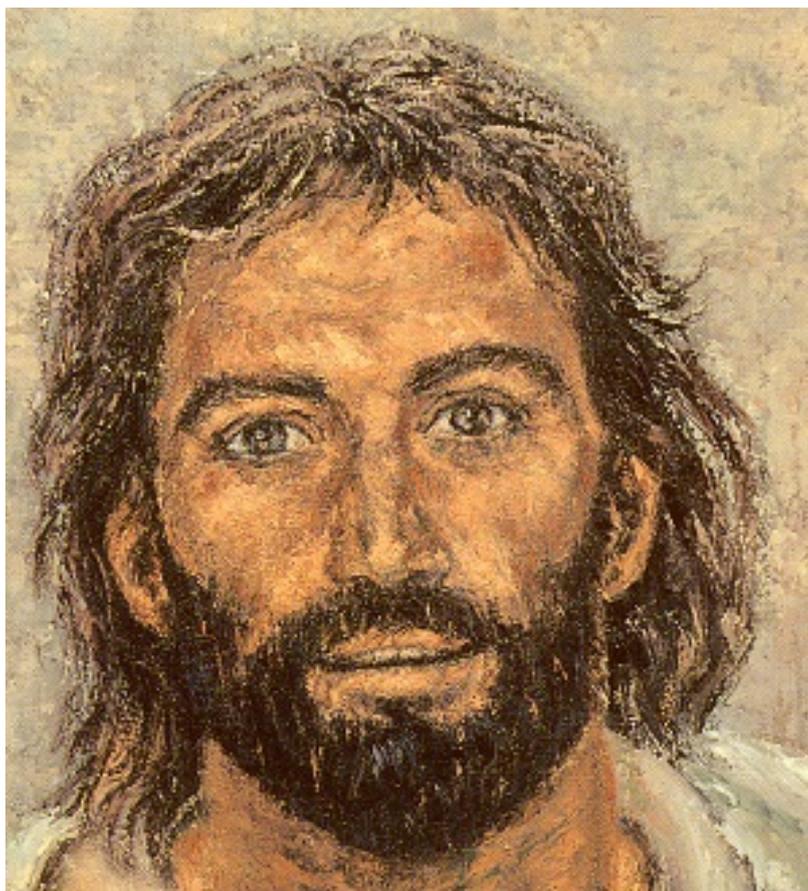


Commentary to the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time - (C)



Jesus' question "Who do the crowds say I am?" had as much relevancy down the centuries as it did when it was first asked in the northeast corner of Palestine. Many have attempted to answer that question. In fact, each Christian of every age must give an answer. We must decide, as someone has suggested, whether we are His disciples or just His fans. Eugene Boylan called Him this tremendous lover. Francis Thompson declared Him the hound of heaven. Someone said that no matter where one hides, He pursues. Teilhard de Chardin named Him the omega point. William O'Malley says He is the sacrament of the sacraments. To paraphrase Seamus Heaney, He is the lure let down to tempt the soul to rise. Roger Garaudy writes, "His whole life conveys one message. Anyone at any moment can start a new future."

Dostoyevsky declared, "If anyone proved to me He was outside the truth...then I would prefer to remain with Him than the truth." Mark Van Doren teaches that He was the most ruthless of men. He declares that He was not like priests who try to be one of the crowd. Bach said He was the joy of man's desiring. Dietrich Bonhoeffer declared prophetically that when He calls someone, He calls that person to die. Harry Emerson Fosdick stated He calls not for the acceptance of a theory but the assumption of a task. He says that He was a Man of His own time speaking to His own generation but He has proved to be a Man of all time speaking to all generations. He remains not primarily an object of speculation but an eternal doer. Newsweek magazine charged that for believers He is the hinge of history, the point at which eternity intersects with time. One unknown says He will remain discontent until all people are fed, housed, and clothed. Manson claimed His aim was not to make God an article of faith but an object of faith. To paraphrase James Barter, He remains forever the sharp stone bruising the soles of our feet.

One pilgrim has responded that He is God spelled out in language that people can understand. Charles Peguy pronounces that He does not want much of us - only our hearts. Frederick Buechner asserts that He is the way. The way out. The only way that matters. Pope John Paul II calls Him a mirror in which we can see who we are. He shows us our human possibilities and potentials. To paraphrase R. Inman, He never strove to explain His vision. He simply invited people to stand by Him and see for themselves. Soren Kierkegaard charges that He objects to our taking the strong wine of the Gospel and turning it into lemonade. He called Him the contemporary eternal. Michael Warnke speaks, "Some people ask me, 'Don't you think He is just a crutch?' Well, mabye so. But when you're crippled, that ain't bad."

A writer declared He possessed the ability of changing a room by just showing up. Boris Pasternak exulted, "He came...and at that moment gods and nations ceased to be and MAN CAME INTO BEING." One worthy has pronounced that He remains forever the grain of sand that upsets the world's machinery. Thomas Geoghegan said His treatment of women was more of a miracle than the loaves and fishes. Another writes that though He preached to thousands, His attention remained on the one - one sheep, one penny, one widow's son, one little girl, one sparrow, you, me. An unknown has written that were He to come back today, we would destroy Him. C.S. Lewis says, "You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God or else a madman or something worse. Down through the centuries, He has been the target of countless assassinations. Though killed a score of times, He never dies. He never wrote His memoirs. He never asked anyone to write about Him. Yet, His life has prompted more biographies than any other person in history. In this third millennium, nearly one third of the world's population claim to be His followers. To borrow Winston Churchill's language, He remains forever a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.

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