



Homily 21st Sunday Ordinary Time (A)
Closing Mass CALL 2008 Membership meeting
Most Rev. Jose H. Gomez
Archbishop of San Antonio

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

It is always exciting to discover God's Providence in our lives. This weekend is a great example of that, even in our Liturgical celebrations.

Yesterday, we celebrated the feast of Santa Rosa de Lima, 1st canonized American saint and today we reflect on this beautiful passage of the Gospel to hear once again Jesus' question to St. Peter: "Who do you say that I am?"

God in His Infinite Providence wants us to renew our commitment to personal holiness, imitating the example of Santa Rosa de Lima and to experience the need of our personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

There are two very interesting moments in this Gospel passage. First Jesus' question: 'Who do you say that I am?' then Jesus' declaration of St. Peter's primacy among the Apostles as the solid foundation of the Church: 'You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church'.

It seems to me that these two moments together can give us light to understand the importance of personal faith and our belonging to the Catholic Church. We are called to follow Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church. Jesus called the Apostles to follow him and then he instituted the Catholic Church as a community of faith.



“Who do you say that I am?” This is one of those questions that define a person’s life. It is similar to the young man’s question about what to do to gain eternal life or the one to St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

Many times we ask ourselves, Why am I a catholic? People write books about it. They try to look for logical answers. They develop theories about it, trying to find answers in Psychology or Sociology. The answer comes from faith, as St. Peter said: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”.

It is a question that demands a personal answer. In the first reading of today’s Mass from the book of the Prophet Isaiah we can see how God takes away Shebna’s leadership of the chosen people to give it to Eliakim. Because of Shebna’s unfaithfulness, God stripped him of his position and gave his power and authority to Eliakin.

In the passage of the Gospel, Jesus’ question to Peter and the Apostles is very personal: Who do you say that I am?

“The best friends, followers and apostles of Christ have always been those who heard within them one day the definitive, inescapable question, before which all others become secondary ... For you, who am I?” Pope John Paul II, 7/1/80

I am sure that we want to say with St. Peter: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”. But today let’s make sure that our lives reflect what we are saying, because it is not a matter of just talking, but showing with deeds our faith in Jesus Christ.

It is easy to talk about it, but what makes the difference is our personal commitment to our faith and to Jesus Christ. The Apostles



believed in Jesus and showed their commitment with deeds of faith to the point of giving their lives for Him.

But Jesus knew that his call was a difficult one. He also knew human nature. We were created to live in a community. Even if we have a tendency to some independence and privacy, we need each other. There is a natural need to love, share, etc. There are some basic institutions of natural law, like Marriage, Family, etc. that show us the need for each other.

Jesus knew all that, so he decides to institute his Church as a place of walking together on our own journey of faith. “The Church, in Christ, is like a sacrament –a sign and instrument, that is of communion with God and of unity among all men” Lumen Gentium, 1

After Peter’s confession of faith, Jesus tells him: “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it...”

Today as we renew our faith in Jesus Christ, we also have to renew our faith and love for the Church.

CALL, the Catholic Association of Latino Leaders, is an association to help us to be more active in the life of the Church: to grow in love for Christ and His Church.

We go to Mary, Mother of the Church, Our Lady of Guadalupe, to ask her intercession for us that we can say with St. Peter, with words and deeds: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” and to have the ‘holy pride’ to be active, committed and faithful members of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Catholic Church, Holy Mother Church. Amen.