

*“But you,” he said, “who do you say that I am?”* Jesus is agonising over what his disciples think of him. Have they understood? Do they realise what I am trying to do? Are they prepared to give themselves body and soul?

Do **we** know who Jesus really is? Do we really know what is happening at Mass? Why do we come here so faithfully Sunday after Sunday?

*“You are the Christ,” said Simon Peter, “the Son of the living God.”* This is not just the affirmation of some vague theological hypothesis, You Jesus, are the real deal, you are everything, you are the one person who can give meaning to my life, you are the one who will lead me across the abyss and into the joy of a life in and with God for ever and ever. You are the one I love. You are the one I worship body and soul. From the bottom of my heart I give myself totally to you.

I, your priest, agonise over you. Are you able to hear and receive God’s Holy Word? Is the preaching of Bishop, priest and deacon actually finding an echo in your heart? Is the liturgy and the music for the liturgy able to transport you into the heavenly realm? Is the liturgy and the music of the liturgy accessible to us all? Are we all able to join in? Are we all participating fully and completely?

*“You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church. And the gate of the underworld can never hold out against it.”* The Catholic Church, the Church of St Peter, makes certain demands of us. It requires us to be at Mass Sunday by Sunday, and on Holy Days of Obligation. It requires us to make our confession at least once a year. It requires us to live according to the rulings of the *Magisterium*.

The trouble with all this is the legalism, ticking boxes, fulfilling our duties and obligations, coming to Mass because we have been told to. But Jesus wasn’t interested in duty and obligation. Jesus is only interested in love. Jesus wants us to be at Mass for love. He is in love with us. He wants us to be in love with him. This is what the Liturgy is. To put so fine a point on it, it is like a sexual relationship. There’s no holding back. It’s a total sharing in the other.

Just being there at the altar, being in the pews is not enough. We must grasp our partner and enter the dance. We must raise up our hearts and minds to heaven. We must sing God’s song and we must sing it with our whole being, our hearts, our minds **and** our voices. We need to open our mouths – and our hymn books. We need to move beyond shyness and embarrassment. We need quite simply to love and to be loved.

*“But you,” he said, “who do you say I am?” “You are the Christ,” said Simon Peter, “the Son of the living God.”* Let us with St Peter and St Paul offer our lives as a libation, *fight the good fight to the end and run the race to the finish..... To him be glory for ever and ever.*