

British essayist **Mr. Charles Lamb**, was once involved in a discussion of the question, who is the greatest literary genius of all time? Two names finally emerged: William Shakespeare and Jesus of Nazareth. Lamb put an end to the debate when he said, "I'll tell you the difference between these two men. If Shakespeare walked into this room right now, we would all rise to greet him, but if Christ came in, we would all fall down and worship." That is the essential difference between the Jesus from Nazareth and all other great people we can think of. Jesus Christ is divine and all others, no matter what their deeds, are but God's creation, walking on the stage for a brief time and then exiting.

Today's gospel passage invites us to reflect on two points in a special way. First, the answer to the question Jesus asked his apostles: "**Who do you say that I am?**" How we answer this question will determine how each of us relates to him. Is he, for example, someone worth our time on Sunday or even during the week? Is he someone we can trust? Is he someone who loves us, forgives us, and gives only the best for us? Is he someone who has the authority to tell us how to live, what we should do, what we may not do? We need to answer this question everyday individually.

Is Jesus Christ truly the Son of God ... literally God in human form, the Divine living within human flesh? Or is he merely human like any of us? Some people claim he's a great teacher. Others think he's a prophet. Some dismiss Jesus as a great failure in life. Millions reject his teaching, millions accept his teaching, and billions recognize him as Savior and Lord. Whatever people think of Jesus Christ, nobody can deny that he stands at the very center of human history.

The resurrection of Jesus is what makes Christianity unique and radically different from Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, or Islam. In fact, the validity of Christianity hinges on the proof of the resurrection of Jesus. If the resurrection never took place, then Jesus would be just another prophet. We would have no true hope for eternal life after our death. But if it is true, then we can do nothing else but accept Jesus as Savior and Lord and receive his gift of love and forgiveness. "***If Jesus is merely a man, we lose nothing by ignoring him, but if he is God, we lose everything.***"

- As Christians we believe that God has made Himself available to us His children, not just to our minds but available to us in every aspect of our lives.
- As Catholics we believe God has made Himself available to us in Christ through the Seven Sacraments of our Church.
- As Catholics we believe that Jesus is present to us in Holy Communion. All of this would not have happened without a resurrection.

Just who is Jesus Christ for you? Peter and the other disciples gave their answers. What is your answer to His question? Your life on this earth and for all of eternity is affected by your answer to this question. If we say He is Divine and human, then,

several areas will begin to change or develop.

- *A growing desire to read the Bible*
- *A growing sense of God's presence.* The gentle voice whispering to you to obey the Scriptures as they should apply to your life
- *A growing sense that you are forgiven* as you confess and repent.
- *A growing desire to fellowship with like-minded believers.*
- *A growing strengthening of your faith;* perseverance amid suffering or persecution for your faith, and a desire to honor Him in all areas. (Acts 4:1-35)
- *A growing desire to give of your time, talents,* and resources for the kingdom of God.

Second point is the pre-eminent position of Peter among the apostles. Another occasion Jesus spoke of Peter's primacy was after the resurrection when He told Peter to feed His lambs and his sheep. There are three images offered in today's gospel concerning the role of Peter. ***He is the rock. He is the one who holds the keys and the one who binds and loses.***

The keys, Jesus said he would give Peter, symbolize this authority. This authority was passed on to his successors, and the leadership position of Peter remains, as part of the structure of Christ's community of believers. We all believe and accept, that Pope, the Holy Father, is the Chief Shepherd and head of the Church. His role is to be the visible representative of Christ.

Today, each of us must make our own personal answer to Our Lord's question: "Who do you say that I am?" Our answer could be:

- *You are an important person in my life. I have other important persons as well to look up to in my life.*
- *You are the dominant person in my life. You are No. 1 in my life, but I have a few others as well to seek advice.*
- *You are everything in my life. You are the only one to whom I can go to receive love, strength, and forgiveness. "To whom shall we go Lord, you have the words of eternal life."*

God Bless You.