



❖ **Mission Co-operative Appeal** – on **August 24**, two missionaries of **ABC Prodein** are coming to our church to make a presentation of their work in Cusco, Peru. ABC Prodein is a private non-profit organization whose main objective is to promote the personal development of man according to the principles contained in the Gospel of Jesus through all kind of medical, educational, and food centres oriented to benefit people of very low resources.

❖ Kolbe Eucharistic Apostolate invites you to a special Kolbe Eucharistic Mini-Retreat on Saturday August 30 at St. Brigid's Church, 300 Wolverleigh Blvd. Toronto, from 2 pm-4:30 pm. There is an opportunity for adoration, prayer and worship. Fr. Carlos Sierra T. will give an inspiring talk on „God's Gifts: Ordinary and Extraordinary Ways to Live Them” For more information visit: www.kolbeapostolate.com.

❖ There will be elections to our **Parish Council** in the Hall on **October 12 and 19**. Our pastor is asking all the parishioners to actively participate both in elections and in preparing the elections by nominating candidates, who are able and willing to represent the interests of our congregation at the Parish Council meetings. The nominated candidate has to agree to his or her nomination by signing the nomination form available at the back of the church. Please leave the signed nomination form in the church office. The deadline is September 21.

❖ Branches Catholic Ministries, who recently sponsored film screenings of the new epic motion picture Mary of Nazareth in Southwestern Ontario, will be hosting a fall conference of **September 27-28** at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls, Canada. **Regenerate(d) 2014** will feature dynamic talks from renowned Catholic speakers including Jeff Cavins, Michael Coren, Matthew Leonard, Father Mitch Pacwa, and Ken Yasinski as well as musical performances by Marian Grace and the Glory Collective. Early Bird Registration and Group Discounts available. Register online at www.go2branches.com. Come. Live the Story.

❖ **Living with Separation and Divorce.** Catholic Family Services of Toronto is offering a ten-week group program for adult men and women who are dealing with the many struggles involved in the process of separation and divorce. Participants will receive support and guidance as they navigate this difficult period of transition. The program will be held on Thursday Evenings, 6.30pm – 8.30pm, October 2nd – December 4th (10 sessions). Location: 1155 Yonge St. (Yonge & Summerhill), cost: \$300 for 10 week program (subsidies available). For further information, please contact Ian Singer, tel. 416-921-1163

Gospel Summary

This Sunday's passage is part of the fourth section (13:54-18:35) of Matthew's gospel in which he explains the meaning of Jesus in relation to the church. Throughout this section we learn that many people did not understand who Jesus was and even took offence at him because of their lack of belief (Mt 13:54-58). It is against this background that Jesus asks his disciples: "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon replies: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus congratulates him as blessed because the heavenly Father has revealed this truth to him. Jesus then, like Yahweh giving Abraham a new name, gives Simon a new name -- Peter, Rock. (Petros in Greek means rock.) He then states that upon this Rock he will build his church, against which no evil will prevail. Further, Jesus promises to give Simon Peter (Rock) the keys to the kingdom of heaven so that whatever he binds or looses on earth will be bound or loosed in heaven.

Life Implications

The historical, earthly Jesus is no longer present to ask us: "Who do you say that I am?" We may mistakenly be inclined to think that if we did have that first-hand experience today, it

would be much easier to affirm Jesus as "Christ, the Son of the living God." The presence of the earthly Jesus, however, is not an advantage in regard to the gift of faith. As we know, most people who heard him and talked with him did not recognize his true identity.

In his humanity, Jesus was a sacrament, a visible sign of the invisible divine presence. There was a double reality about him -- one visible, able to be grasped by human reason; the other, invisible, able to be grasped only when revealed by the heavenly Father and accepted in faith. The life implication for us lies in the fact that Jesus, to whom "all power in heaven and on earth has been given" (Mt 28:18), extends his meaning as sacrament of divine presence to others.

Jesus identifies Simon Peter as the Rock upon which his church will be built so that Peter's binding and loosing on earth simultaneously binds and looses in heaven. Thus the church with its visible structure of authority, through Christ's power, becomes an extension of Christ as the sacrament of his presence in history. There is as a consequence a double reality about the church through its communion with Christ -- one visible, able to be recognized by human reason; the other, invisible, able to be recognized only when revealed by the heavenly Father and accepted in faith.

Today, against the background of so many diverse opinions about his identity, Jesus asks us through the sacramentality of his church: "But who do you say that I am?" We pray that, like Peter, we will be congratulated as blessed because the heavenly Father reveals to us that Jesus has kept his promise to be with us "always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

The church, by giving us Matthew's gospel, proclaims the good news that Christ is with us, and his presence may be recognized in our time just as during the time of his earthly life. Through the sacrament of baptism we become his followers and enter with him into the divine life of the Father and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:18-20). In the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Risen Lord is truly present, praying with us and giving himself to us as life-giving bread and wine (Mt 26:26-29).

We also hear the good news that Jesus is present and identifies himself with every human being, however lowly -- the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the criminal (Mt 25:31-46). This strange presence of Jesus in our midst may prove to be a stumbling-stone when we respond to the question: "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter was able to affirm Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God: but balked at the notion that Jesus would suffer and die (Mt 16:21-23). We too may affirm Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, but balk at the notion that Jesus is now present as the one in need. In fact, every human being by Christ's power becomes a double reality -- one visible, recognized by reason; the other, invisible (the presence of Christ in need), recognized only when revealed by the heavenly Father and accepted in faith.

In this Sunday's liturgy we thank God that we are numbered among the blessed to whom is revealed the true identity and presence of Jesus in our midst. We also pray for a deeper, more complete faith so that we may recognize the divine presence even when it does not make sense to our human understanding, and will cost us something to respond. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. *By Campion P. Gavalier, O.S.B.*