



And You?

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

Isaiah 50:5-9a

Psalm 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

James 2:14-18

Mark 8:27-35

Gathering

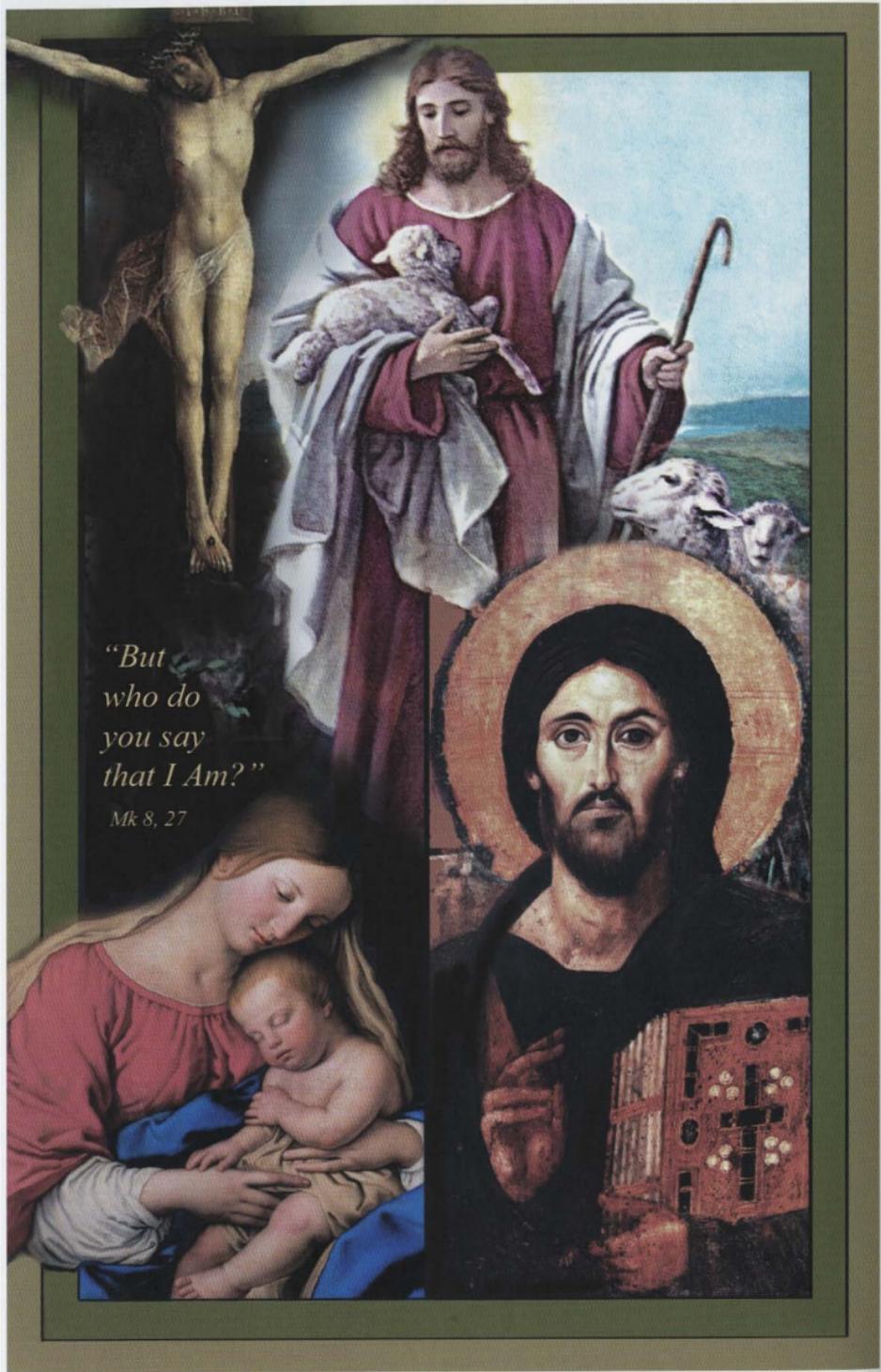
(An unlit candle stands among several images of Jesus (e.g., the figure of Jesus on a cross, a photo of the Good Shepherd, an infant Jesus from a crèche) on a table in the gathering place.)

If new members are joining the community, some time is taken for people to become acquainted and for newcomers to learn something about the history of the community. All share their hopes and expectations about being a part of a small church community.)

In this week's gospel Jesus asks the key question: "But who do you say that I am?" He asks the question of his disciples; he asks the question of us all across the ages.

Prayer

(The candle is lit. The leader invites the community to a time of silent



*"But
who do
you say
that I Am?"*

Mk 8, 27

attention to God's presence. In the quiet, the images on the table are passed around and then they are returned to the table. The leader then addresses the community, "Jesus asks us, 'Who do you say I am?'" Members pause for some moments of silence. After some time of quiet the prayer continues as follows.)

Member: I love the LORD because he has heard
my voice in supplication,
Because he has inclined his ear to me
the day I called.

All: I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

Member: The cords of death encompassed me;
the snares of the netherworld seized upon me;
I fell into distress and sorrow,
and I called upon the name of the LORD,
"O LORD, save my life!"

All: I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

Member: Gracious is the LORD and just;
yes, our God is merciful.
The LORD keeps the little ones;
I was brought low, and he saved me.

All: I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

Member: For he has freed my soul from death,
my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.
I shall walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.

All: I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

Psalm 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites

members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.

When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. Pausing between them, the leader then poses these two questions: “What draws you to this gospel?” “Where do you resist this gospel?” The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After a time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)

Reflection

“Who do *people* say that I am?” “Who do *you* say that I am?” First, Jesus inquires about what the people are saying and then he asks the disciples to look into their own hearts to find an answer.

Today’s gospel is our gospel too! Perhaps in our own hearts we hear Jesus say, “*And you, who do you say that I am?*” How we respond to that question will shape and give meaning to how we live out our faith. And, of course, how we live our lives reveals who we really think he is for us.

If, like Peter, we dare to speak what’s in our heart, what we say can both tell us something about who Jesus is, as well as challenge us to live accordingly. If we say “You are the Compassionate One,” we will find that we are challenged to let our own compassion grow. If we say, “You are the Wounded Healer,” then we too will find ourselves called to embrace, and find meaning in, the suffering that comes our way even as we reach out to others in their suffering. If we say, “You are my Brother or Friend who listens unconditionally,” then we will need to be attentive listeners and make space to take in another’s story without judging or fixing. If we say, “You are the Forgiving One,” then we will be moved to become more generous in forgiving, even as we acknowledge our own need for forgiveness

Again and again throughout our lifetime, Jesus asks us, “*And you, who do you say that I am?*” Day by day, he continues to call us to lose our lives for his sake, and so gain his life. Let us pray that the Lord open our ears that e may hear his question as it comes to us in daily life. May our response

take us deeply into the mystery of Jesus and the service of others!

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ Tell a story about your childhood image of Jesus. Share something about your current image of Jesus. How has it changed over the years?
- ◆ Speak of some ways you act on your faith these days.
- ◆ What does taking up your cross mean in your life?
- ◆ How do you answer Jesus' question today: "Who do you say that I am?"

HEARING THE GOSPEL'S LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: "What do you hear Christ saying to us in hearing and sharing his word?" "What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?" "How are you/we being called to live in response to God's word?" After a pause, the leader invites the community to a time of conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)

Response in Action Suggestions

- ◆ Draw a timeline spanning your life. Mark and name the times there have been significant or shifting images of Jesus. Choose one to journal about.
- ◆ Go to www.youtube.com and search for *Impact Morphing Jesus*. Enjoy this art-filled composite of images of Jesus throughout h.
- ◆ Share a good religious book with a child in you life. e.g., *The Caterpillar That Came to Church*; *The tale of the Three Trees* or *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Prayer

(After a brief pause, the gospel or a portion of it, either of the other readings as appropriate or the responsorial psalm are proclaimed. The idea is to select a text that lends itself to inviting members to the time of silent prayer that follows. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions

to the members: ***“What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?” “What do you say to him in response?”*** The community pauses for a full five minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental selection may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two, or a brief expression that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally. The community receives this without additional comment. Following this sharing, the community members join in singing, ***“The Power of Your Love.”*** The song may be found on the Internet.

When the song is complete, members offer prayers of praise, thanksgiving and petition. To each prayer, members respond, ***“Jesus, you are always more than we can imagine or understand.”***

When these prayers are complete, members join hands and pray the Lord's Prayer.

The session concludes with the exchange of a sign of peace.)

