

## 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

It is important to read today's Gospel and next week's Gospel as two parts of a single story. These readings are a turning point in Matthew's Gospel. This week we hear Jesus name Simon Peter as the rock upon which he will build his Church. Next week we will hear Jesus call this same Simon Peter "Satan" when he reacts negatively to Jesus' prediction about his passion and death.

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks his disciples what people are saying about his identity. The disciples indicate that most people believe that Jesus is a prophet of Israel. Then Jesus asks his disciples who they believe that he is. Simon Peter answers, identifying Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

Jesus commends Simon Peter for this profession of faith, indicating that this insight has come from God. Because of Simon Peter's response, Jesus calls him the "rock" upon which Jesus will build the Church. This is a word play on the name Peter, which is Greek for "rock". Peter is then given special authority by Jesus, a symbolic key to the Kingdom of Heaven. Peter will play an important role in the early Christian community as a spokesperson and a leader.

In today's Gospel, Peter's recognition of Jesus' identity is credited to a revelation by God. This will contrast sharply with Jesus' rebuke of Peter in next week's Gospel. When Peter rejects Jesus' prediction of his passion and death, Peter is said to be no longer thinking as God does but as humans do.

The use of the term *church* in today's Gospel is one of only three such occurrences in Matthew's Gospel. Peter in this Gospel is being credited as the foundation for the Church, a privilege granted to him because of his recognition of Jesus' identity. The Church continues to be grounded in the faith that Jesus Christ is Lord.

### Carol Campbell

Carol is now back home from hospital after her operation to repair her broken hip. Along with her family she thanks everyone who prayed for her or had masses offered.

### FHC and Confirmation

The First Holy Communion Mass will take place on Saturday 5 September at 10.30am. The Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) for the children and their families will take place in church on Friday 4 September at 6pm followed by a meeting with Fr Rob and the catechists. There will also be a short rehearsal after the meeting to allow the children to familiarise themselves with the new set-up of the church for social distancing and the order of the Mass. It is mandatory to attend the Friday session.

Our Confirmation Mass will be on Saturday 12 September at 12 noon. Please note the change of time. Candidates should arrive by 11:30 (latest 11:45) to allow time to discuss the format. There is a maximum of three guests each.

### **Cissie Roche memorial**

Thank you to all who contributed to the purchase of the memorial to Cissie. The reredos has now arrived and will be installed in a few weeks' time. The installation will require some building work and I ask your understanding for any disruption.

### **Live-streaming**

As many of you have seen we are now able to live-stream events here from SJV. There have been a few problems, in particular there have been sound issues. We are working on this and hope that things will improve shortly.

### **Reception of Holy Communion**

Could I just give you a gentle reminder of a few important points about the reception of the Sacrament in this time of pandemic:

1. Approach the priest/minister and remove your mask before you receive the Sacred Host.
2. Make a throne of your left hand over your right then using your right hand reverently consume.
3. Check for any particles of the Host that may have remained on your hand and fingers and consume any that you find.
4. Replace your mask and only then move away.
5. Please do remember the usual signs of reverence such as appropriate genuflections etc.

Fr Rob