

Eighth Day
October 20th

Hero of the Church of Christ

Preparatory Reading:

“*Who do the people say I am?* (Lk 9:18). Jesus asked his disciples this question one day as they were walking together. He also puts this question to Christians on the paths of our time: *Who do the people say I am?*”

As it was 2,000 years ago in an obscure part of the then known world, so today, human opinions about Jesus are divided. Some attribute to him the gift of prophetic speech. Others consider him an extraordinary personality, an idol that attracts people. Others, again, believe he is even capable of ushering in a new era.

But who do you say that I am? (Lk 9:20). The question cannot be given a "neutral" answer. It requires a taking of sides and involves everyone. Today, as well, Christ is asking: ... *who do you say that I am?*

It is a question that comes from Jesus' heart. He who opens his own heart wants the person before him not to answer with his mind alone. The question that comes from Jesus' heart must move ours: *Who am I for you? What do I mean to you? Do you really know me? Are you my witnesses? Do you love me?*

Then Peter, the disciples' spokesman, answered: *We consider you the Christ of God* (Lk 9:20). The Evangelist Matthew reports Peter's profession in greater detail: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!* (Mt 16:16). Today the Pope, as Successor of the Apostle Peter by the grace of God, professes on your behalf and with you: “*You are the Messiah of God. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

Down the centuries, there has been a continual struggle for the correct profession of faith. *Thanks be to Peter, whose words have become the norm!*

They should be used to measure the Church's efforts in seeking to express in time what Christ means to her. In fact, it is not enough to profess with one's lips alone. Knowledge of Scripture and Tradition is important, the study of the Catechism is valuable; but what good is all this if faith lacks deeds?

Professing Christ calls for following Christ. The correct profession of faith must be accompanied by a correct conduct of life. Orthodoxy requires orthopraxis. From the start, Jesus never concealed this demanding truth from his disciples. Actually, Peter had barely made an extraordinary profession of faith when he and the other disciples immediately heard Christ clarify what the Master was expecting of them: If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me (Lk 9:23).”¹

“Christian heroism lies in holiness. The ‘Church’s heroes’ are not necessarily those who have made history according to human standards, but the men and women who perhaps, in the eyes of the world, seemed unimportant, but in fact are great in the sight of God. We will look for them in vain among the ranks of the mighty; they remain indelibly inscribed with capital letters in the ‘Book of Life.’...

Young people... bear courageous witness to Christ without compromise, I reaffirm what I wrote in the Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*: ‘People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories’ (n. 42).”²

Prayer:

Eternal God, who in your divine providence have given us Saint John Paul II as example and guide, grant that we may be grateful for this gift by being faithful to his magisterium, by living his teachings and by entrusting our prayers to his intercession.

May he, who in union with the bishops of the whole world consecrated the Church and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, obtain for us the grace to be faithful to this kind Mother. And may we repeat each day as he taught us:

“Virgin Mother of my God, make me all yours!
Yours in life, yours in death;
yours in suffering, yours in fears and in misery;
yours on the cross and in painful discouragement;
yours in time and in eternity.
Virgin Mother of my God, make me all yours!”

¹ SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Homily from the Mass for the Beatification of Fr. Jakob Kern, Sr. Restituta Kafka and Fr. Anton Maria Schwarz* (06/21/1998). http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19980621_austria-beatification.html

² SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *General Audience*, Wednesday June 24th, 1998 http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_24061998.html

Totus tuus Maria.
Amen.

Request the particular grace desired through this novena.

Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be. Then pray the litany.

LITANY IN HONOR OF ST. JOHN PAUL II

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

Christ, hear us
Christ, graciously hear us

Christ, hear us
Christ, graciously hear us

God the Father of Heaven
God the Son, Redeemer of the World
God the Holy Spirit
Holy Trinity, One God
Great in Prayer, Sufferings, Words, and Deeds
Intrepid Wrestler
Panoply of Seven Swords
Servant of Mankind
Man of Sorrows
Burning Candle
Man of Integrity

Have mercy on us
Have mercy on us
Have mercy on us
Have mercy on us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us

Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world

Spare us, O Lord

Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world

Graciously hear us, O Lord

Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world

Have mercy on us

