

Homily August 23rd and 24th.
21st week in ordinary time
Deacon Bob Corsaro

Jesus and St. Peter are playing golf. They are teeing it up on a par 3, 150 yard hole with a pond in front of the green. St Peter grabs his 7 Iron, swings away and it lands in the middle of the green pin high.

Jesus tees it up, addresses the ball and St Peter says, “excuse me Jesus, what club are you using.” Jesus replies, “my pitching wedge.” Peter says, “Jesus, That’s not enough club, you’ll be way short.”

Jesus replies, “don’t worry about it, Tiger woods can do it.”

So Jesus swings away. It’s a beautiful towering shot it hangs for a moment as great golf shots do and down, down down it comes.... SPLASH, its in the pond. Jesus walks to the pond and proceeds to walk across the water, looks down, reaches for the ball and returns to the tee.

He tees it up and St. Peter says, “what are you doing? Using the pitching wedge again?”

Jesus replies, “Oh ye of little faith, stand behind me and watch... Tiger woods can do it.” So Jesus hits away....same thing towering shot, SPLASH ...into the pond it goes.

As Jesus walks over to retrieve it again, a foursome comes up to the tee, and they ask St. Peter, “who does that guy down there think her is, walking on water like that, Jesus Christ?”

St Pete responds, “Well as a matter of fact he is Jesus Christ, but thinks he’s Tiger Woods!”

In today's gospel reading Jesus asked Peter, "But who do you say that I am?"

Jesus wasn't asking Peter to recite a series of Doctrines about his identity. He wasn't asking Peter to work out a Christological formula.

Jesus was pointing his question directly to Peter, BUT YOU.... Inviting him to express his own faith.

Does he believe in Jesus and what does he believe about Jesus.

Peter didn't have the benefit of scripture, doctrine, Christological formula, the creed, like we do.

Peter had first hand experience of Jesus and through the gift of God's grace, Peter has come to know that Jesus is the revelation of God to the world.

This realization of the true identity of Jesus, as Jesus said was not of the flesh, but was revealed to Peter from the Father in heaven.

This my friends is God's grace at work. It is the same grace that comes to us from the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

When Peter answered Jesus' question, he expressed his faith to Jesus. He articulated what the Church has come to believe about Christ.

Other followers of Christ will have to answer the same question And pass that faith on to their children.

Jesus asks us all. But who do you say that I am?

Jesus isn't asking us if we go to church on Sunday, or say grace before meals.

Firstly, as he did with Peter, he invites us to acknowledge our belief in him and to bear witness to his Love and manner of living in our world.

If we say we are Christians, yet there is little that signifies that Jesus had made any difference in our lives....who do we say that he is?

If we insist our children must go to church with us, but at home they hear us use racial slurs, utter stereotypical comments about the poor and gossip about other people.....
Who do we say that he is?

What response to the question do our actions and our life reveal in our answer to him?

What changes must we make so that others will experience us as people who truly believe that yes, Jesus is the Christ, The son of The Living God.

And how do we make change? Are we willing to accept change? Are we hungry for change and a closer relationship with Jesus. Change can be difficult, at times very counter-cultural.

All of us deep down are hungry for the Love of Jesus. We know that Peter certainly was.

We come to church, to worship and to be fed.

In what other ways are we fed by Jesus?

Individual prayer, yes just sitting quietly on our own. Reading scripture. Caring for others.

Become active in a ministry here at church, maybe the Stephen Ministry, a ministry of care to others in crisis.

Offer forgiveness or apology in a stressed relationship.

A simple hello or an act of kindness to a stranger.

As we do these things it's important to pay attention to what is going on inside us. Do we feel the Holy Spirit working within us? Feeding us? What is changing inside us?

Taking time out for these things in our daily routines takes discipline. It's called spiritual discipline.

I attended a monthly men's fellowship gathering here recently and we talked about discipline and goals.. What is the goal of a Christian?

To develop a personal relationship with Jesus.. Not just to get to heaven, but how about enjoying the Kingdom of God while we are still here?

Peter knew the challenge.. It wasn't easy for him was it? It takes discipline to live the Gospel.

What is the goal of an Olympic athlete? The Gold Medal. The Discipline and training brings them closer to their goal.

How did Tiger Woods rise to the top of his game and become **recognized** as the Worlds #1 Golfer. Discipline.

How will others **recognize** us as people who truly believe that yes, Jesus is the Christ, The son of The Living God?

To quote St. Francis: “We should preach the gospel daily, and use words when necessary.”