

# TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year A

Isaiah 22:19-23  
Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6, 8  
Romans 11:33-36  
Matthew 16:13-20

## Gathering

*(An unlit candle, a bible open to this week's gospel, a googled portrayal of Peter and a large rock are placed on a table in the midst of the community.)*

## Prayer

*(The candle is lit. The leader invites members to sign themselves with the sign of the cross and to be attentive to God's presence. After a time of quiet, members join in singing, "Jesus, Remember Me;" available on Internet.)*

## 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

A friend went to visit her elderly aunt in a nursing home. She went up to the aunt, who was lying in bed, and asked: "Do you know who I am?" The

aunt replied, “No. But if you ask at that desk over there, that nurse will tell you.”

Well, Jesus didn’t ask the disciples if they or the people knew his name. He was really asking what he meant to them. Jesus asks us that question every day of our lives. Often, we don’t hear the question. But even if we don’t hear the question, we answer that question every day by what we say and what we do.

We are called to become rocks of faith like Peter. Peter and petrified have the same Greek root meaning rock. Petrified wood is wood that becomes rock by a process that takes millions of years. Over the course of time, the minerals in the soil and water around a piece of wood, leech into the wood, permeate the wood, push out the less lasting chemicals and then solidify.

That is something like the process we should be undergoing in the development of our faith. We need to let the good news of Jesus Christ seep into us. We need to let Jesus enter into us and displace the evils of this world that fill us up. Unlike wood, though, we don’t have millions of years, so we can’t just wait to let it happen. We need to help it happen. We need to seek the Lord – we need to call on Jesus – we need to invite Jesus more fully into our lives every single day. And we need to *act as if*.

### Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ How *solid* is your faith these days?
- ◆ If Jesus approached you today to ask, “Who do you say that I am,” how would you respond?
- ◆ What can you do to let Jesus *seep* into your life more?

### 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 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

- ♦ Set aside ten minutes a day this week for reflection and prayer. Hear Jesus' question, Who do you say that I am? Notice how you respond.
- ♦ When the appropriate occasion presents itself this week, tell someone who Jesus is to you.

## 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 leader invites prayers of praise, thanksgiving and petition. To each prayer, members respond, “**Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.**”)*

*(When these prayers are complete, members join hands to pray the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary and the Glory be.... The session concludes with the exchange of a sign of peace.)*