

TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - YEAR A August 22/23, 2026

Isaiah 22:19-23

Romans 11:33-36

Matthew 16:13-20

I welcome you all my dear brothers and sisters to this Sunday's Eucharistic celebration.

In the liturgy of the word today, our basic question of attention is on the question raised by Jesus Christ to his disciples in the Gospel, the question is **"Who do you say that I am?" - "Who do you say Jesus is?" To you, to your family, in the Church....**

Among the disciples, only Simon Peter gave the correct answer: **"YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD"**

Indeed, Simon Peter was guided by the Holy Spirit to give such a brilliant answer. And Simon Peter was blessed by Jesus Christ. Christ gave him a mission.

He told him, **"YOU ARE PETER and on this Rock I will build my Church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it..."**

The word Peter comes from the Greek word Petros which means **"Rock" — something that is "Firm", SOLID.**

This defines the **Apostolic character** and foundation of the Catholic Church.

We are jubilating in a Catholic Church that is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ himself being the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20).

From this background, we learn two lessons.

1. RECOGNISING JESUS CHRIST IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

- Christ is in the Eucharist (Real Presence)

- Christ is in the Word - the Holy Word we celebrate in Mass

- Christ is in the Priest, a priest is an alter Christus (another Christ), I remember during my ordination in 2021 at the Litany calling on all Saints to pray for us priestly candidates... while prostrating — lying flat on the floor — I shed tears, me the earthen vessel, a sinner being called another Christ... It is an honor, but to be carried with great humility. Pray for all priests, because we are human, but given the most HOLY TASK.

- Christ is in the Community of believers, He is present in you and in me, He is present in the Church.

- Christ is present in the poor, suffering and the little ones (children). Wherever we help, there we find Christ.

2. WE ARE THE NEW PETER, THE NEW ROCKS

As believers, we are the firm rocks, the new Peter. We ought to remain firm in the Catholic faith, never fear any forces against the Catholic Church, or against our faith. **As firm rocks that help in transmitting the Catholic faith to your children and to the present and future families. Be firm in proclaiming your Catholic belief. Say it with boldness, I AM CATHOLIC Man, woman, teenager, youth, boy or girl.**

**For me, I always say, I
AM A CATHOLIC PRIEST. Let us proclaim the name of Christ.**

Let us make CHRIST proclaimed in our lives, every day and every season and everywhere.

We ask the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Bavo to pray for us, that we may be enlightened to recognize Christ and remain firm and strong in our Catholic faith.