

AUGUST 21, 2011

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MATTHEW 16:13-20

"Who do you say I am?" The question asked of Peter is an invitation to receive the on-going self-revelation of God through a personal experience of the person of Jesus. Though the Hebrew concept of Messiah put limitations on Peter's understanding of the events to come in the life of Jesus, the grace of this particular moment was to recognize Jesus both as Messiah and son of the living God.

As Sisters of Divine Providence we identify with the call to open ourselves, like Peter, to the on-going revelation of God. Our Constitution states:

"Because we believe in the reality of Providence, we are confident that the movements of history in which we participate are guided by the loving power of God" (#8).

"Abandonment to Divine Providence means living with God in the depths of our hearts, attentive to God's constant presence in the interior calls of grace and the external happenings of life (#12).

‡ What does it mean to live these words?

A way of understanding our call might be through the question put to Peter:

‡ "Who do you say I am?"

‡ How do our daily reality and the historical movements of our times continually ask this question of us?

When we encounter the young student who is so difficult to reach, the woman abused, the person struggling with a life-threatening disease, could not it be Jesus asking of us "Who do you say I am?" in this encounter with life. When faced with our own fear, with the call to risk growth, with doubts and uncertainty about the future, the question is "Who do you say I am?" When pondering the beauty of our earth, when disturbed by the destruction of natural resources, "Who do you say I am?" is God's invitation to hear and receive a new Word for our lives and our participation in the mission of Jesus.

The question "Who do you say I am?" continually calls us to abandonment to Providence encountered in the ordinary events of daily life. It demands ongoing conversion of heart and requires a trusting response to the living god, "who leads us to live in justice, peace, freedom and love within ourselves and with all of creation" (#12).

--Sr. Anne Michele Berry, CDP