



### *Matthew 16:13-19*

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

**Introductory Prayer:** Lord, you know how much I need you and depend on you for everything. You know my weakness and my faults. I put all my confidence in your love and mercy in my daily actions. I trust in your power, your promise and your grace.

**Petition:** Lord let me acknowledge you with my words and actions.

**1. Opinion and Private Certitudes:** People give all sorts of answers to the question of who Jesus is. No figure in history has provoked more comment or more debate than Jesus Christ. And it is fair to say that in every case, how we answer the question of who Christ is determines how we live our lives: the values and moral convictions we will have, the hope we have for the life to come, the charity and service we live now in our daily lives. All of this is inspired by the stance we take on the person of Jesus. "Who do *you* say that I am?" is a question that necessarily involves a commitment on our part. The answer to this question requires a change in our attitudes and behavior.

**2. The Life-changing Moment:** For Peter, this was a moment of true openness to the grace of the Holy Spirit. He grasped in a moment that Christ was no mere prophet or enlightened teacher of moral truths, but something much more. He was the Christ, that is, the Savior. And not only Messiah, he was the Son of the Living

God—Jesus was equal to God in all things. This profession of faith would change Peter’s life from that moment on. In the Creed, we profess the same faith as Peter did. Every time we receive the Eucharist, we join our response to that of Peter: We believe you are the Son of God, and there is no salvation by any other name. What changes does this faith require of me? Can I continue to be the same as before?

**3. A New Name and a New Mission:** Peter’s profession of faith was no simple intellectual response to a question. It was the taking of a position, a definitive stance before God and before the world. Peter embraced the truth about Christ, and in return, Christ entrusted him with the care of the Church. He would be “Rock,” the foundation of his Church, and Christ offered him the guarantee that the Church would persevere forever. When we profess our faith, Christ gives us a task also. We are made “apostles” and sent out as “ambassadors of Christ” to the world. Our stance before this truth has consequences: We must be consistent with our faith each day.

**Conversation with Christ:** Lord, teach me not only to acknowledge you with my mind, but to embrace the truth that you are the Son of the Living God with all my life, words, and actions. Let the conviction I have become a way of life, so that I can give witness to you before all men.

**Resolution:** I will examine my life and evaluate what sort of witness I give to my faith that Christ is the Son of the Living God.