

Sunday Message

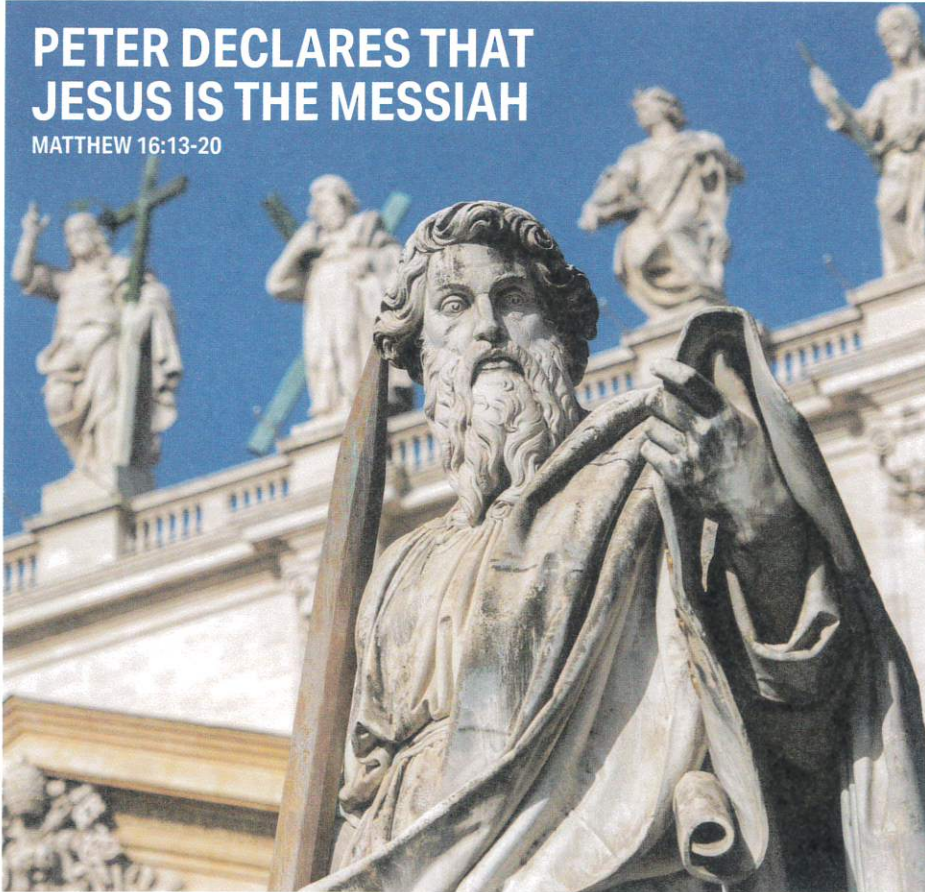
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 23 August 2026 • Psalter Week 1

PETER DECLARES THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

MATTHEW 16:13-20



Jesus asks his disciples a vital question: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" Their responses vary, reflecting popular opinions about him. Jesus then turns the question directly to his disciples: "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answers with clarity and faith: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus affirms Peter's insight as a revelation from God the Father, highlighting that recognition of Christ's true identity comes through divine guidance, not human reasoning alone. He then gives Peter a unique role: to be the rock upon which the Church will be built, and the authority to bind and loose on earth, reflecting heavenly authority. This Gospel points to the foundation of the Church as faith in Christ and the centrality of Peter's leadership as a sign of God's plan for guiding his people.

Matthew also underscores the importance of personal faith and discernment. The confession is not just a historical moment but a model for all believers: recognising Jesus as the Messiah and responding with commitment is the cornerstone of Christian life. It invites reflection on our own understanding of Christ and our willingness to align our lives with him. ■

LEARN

Christ entrusted Peter and his successors with the care of his Church, showing that personal faith is inseparable from our responsibility to participate in the life and mission of the Church.



REFLECT

The response of Peter today reminds us that faith is personal. It is about recognising Jesus in our own lives, not just repeating what others say.

Peter's confession also shows courage. He speaks honestly, even when others are unsure. In our lives, we are called to the same courage: to acknowledge Christ in our words, choices, and actions, even when it is difficult or unpopular. Jesus' promise to build his Church on Peter's faith reminds us that our faith is not private. It shapes the community of believers and encourages others to trust in God.

Practically, the Gospel invites us to take small steps each day to live our faith. It could be offering a kind word, helping someone in need, or simply sharing your belief in Christ when the opportunity arises. Each act of faith – however ordinary – strengthens the Church and deepens our own relationship with Jesus. Faith is living, courageous, and communal, and it begins with honestly answering Jesus' question in our hearts. ■

SAY

"Lord, increase my faith, and help me to know You more clearly, love You more dearly, and follow You more nearly."

DO

This week, ask yourself honestly: "Who is Jesus for me?" and take one small step to live that answer – a kind word, a helpful action, or a moment of prayer.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me;
save the servant who trusts in you, my God.
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.*

COLLECT

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 22:15, 19-23

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord God of hosts,
'Come, go to this steward, to Shebna, who is over the household, and say to him:
"I will thrust you from your office, and you will be pulled down from your station. In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honour to his father's house."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 138(137):1-2a, 2bc, 3, 6, 8bc. R. 8bc

*R: O Lord, your merciful love is eternal;
discard not the work of your hands.*

1. I thank you, LORD, with all my heart;
you have heard the words of my mouth.
In the presence of the angels I praise you.
I bow down towards your holy Temple. **R.**
2. I give thanks to your name
for your merciful love and your faithfulness.
On the day I called, you answered me;
you increased the strength of my soul. **R.**
3. The LORD is high, yet he looks on the lowly,
and the haughty he knows from afar.
O LORD, your merciful love is eternal;
discard not the work of your hands. **R.**

SECOND READING Romans 11:33-36

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements and how inscrutable his ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?' 'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL Matthew 16:18

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL Matthew 16:13-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time: When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O Lord, who gained for yourself a people by adoption through the one sacrifice offered once for all, bestow graciously on us, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace in your Church. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord;
you bring forth bread from the earth
and wine to cheer the heart.*

Or

*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
has eternal life, says the Lord,
and I will raise him up on the last day.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Complete within us, O Lord, we pray, the healing work of your mercy and graciously perfect and sustain us, so that in all things we may please you. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.