

Where do I fit in? Jesus is asking amidst the shrines to the gods and great leaders that were scattered throughout Caesarea Philippi.

Today he might add, standing before shrines of golf courses, resorts, little league sports or even the bed on Sunday morning – “Who am I to you? Where do I fit in?”

Sadly, painfully, he is often a choice among other choices. Nice stuff, but...

+In his teens, C.S. Lewis was a professed agnostic. But in time, he discovered what Christianity really was about. During his BBC radio talk, Mere Christianity, he said, “I am trying to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him:

‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who is merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher.

He would either be a lunatic, on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg, or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse.”

If we accept Jesus as a moral teacher, then we must necessarily accept him as God, for great moral teachers do not tell lies.

Christianity is about a person, Jesus Christ, and all those other things must follow from our commitment to him.

\*Mother Teresa gave full credit to the social workers of the state, who worked in Calcutta, but she made a very clear distinction between their approach and hers. “They are working for something, while we are working for someone.”

\*Karl Rahner was asked, at Vatican II what happened to the central place of Mary in the Catholic Church, and he replied, “For many Christians, Christianity has been reduced to a set of ideals and abstractions, and abstractions don’t need a mother! While Christianity is about a person, there will always be a need for a mother. “

#### SEEING:

Jesus is asking his apostles and he is asking us, to take a deeper look. In the gospel we will see his disciples will gradually begin to understand who he is and Peter is the first.

+Remember those illustrations where printed beneath the picture were the words: “Can you find the man hidden in the picture?” You’d look and look, and at first wouldn’t see anything that looked like a man. Then you’d turn the paper this way and that to get a different view of it.

Suddenly, from the edge of a fluffy white cloud you’d see an ear. Then, from the green leaves of a tree you’d see a mouth, and so on, until you’d see an entire man’s face smiling out at you from the picnic scene.

Once you saw the man, that picnic scene was never the same again. For you had found the hidden man. You yourself had seen the smiling face. It's the same way in our own lives. We Christians know by faith that there is a man hidden away in every scene of daily life. He is real, however.

And that man's name is Jesus. Once we find him, up close and personal, no scene in our lives is ever the same – nor should it. That is part of the message of today's Gospel – look deeper.

Peter got the answer right, but he didn't necessarily understand what it meant (i.e. the place of suffering, service, sacrifice). Most of us could give a nice definition of who Jesus is from our bibles or religious education – I would hope most of us trot out some answers.

But knowing the Christ does not come from some book. There is a very great difference between academic knowledge, which is in the head, and experiential knowledge, which is in both.

I can have degree in theology up in my head, and not really believe in God at all, down in the heart. I could know a great deal about Jesus, but not actually know him.

+A group of people were discussing good and bad memories, and their retention span for things they had committed to memory. A challenge was thrown down to anyone who would demonstrate an ability to recite something learned by heart.

The first off his feet was a young man, offering to recite the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm from memory – most of which I hope we are all familiar! “The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing shall I want...”

He had a clear voice, good enunciation, so much so that might even impress Caroline Douglass. He recited the psalm in a way that drew thunderous applause when he finished. In fact, on demand, he had to recite the psalm a second time, again to great applause.

The second person on his feet was an elderly gentleman, who was stooped, and whose voice cracked somewhat, as he, too, recited the very same psalm. It wasn't easy to hear him. However, the listeners soon became aware of being touched by some inner power, as each bowed a head, and felt a sense of reverent prayer rise up from the heart.

The conclusion of the recital was met with complete silence, and with a sense of reverent awe. The young man who first recited the psalm was the first to respond to the situation, as he stood up and explained the different responses to the two recitals of the same psalm.

He put it simply, “I know the psalm” he said, “but that old man, it is obvious that he knows the shepherd.”

“Who do you say I am?” Look deeper and perhaps we will *see him* and *know him*.