

Gospel Reflection by Rev. John Dillon
Matthew 16:13-20

Jesus has taken His disciples to a quiet country area north of Jerusalem, away from the regular daily routine of crowds that gather to hear Jesus preach the "Good News" of God's message. Why? Who knows? It's a beautiful area, a national park today...back then the Roman soldiers used it as a location for rest & relaxation. Once there, Jesus asks them what might seem a very strange question, "Who do people say I am?" A question that through the centuries has brought forth many deep theological studies, but no real answers. I believe after months of preaching, teaching, and healing, it is only human nature to ask "How am I doing?" It has not been an easy time. His preaching did not please everyone. Jesus has been challenging the establishment, criticizing temple elders, being with the lower classes. It was a time of stress, uncertainty, and a life-threatening time.

Jesus is showing himself to be like us. A human moment in His life. I believe just like us He wanted a performance review. He wanted to know was He really helping to bring hope for the future, courage and strength to bear the hardships and restriction of daily life. His fellow Jews faced hundreds of temple laws and restrictions required to please God. Trying to obey those laws was a hardship in itself.

Today's Gospel brings this question to us. We are all in the middle of a whole world of hurt. There is no end to the list of pain and anxiety we and those around us are suffering with no clear end in sight.

Our question is...Who do we say is our source of hope and strength to survive?

I truly believe God may test us but will never desert us. Our faith and trust in the Holy Spirit is our source of hope and strength to survive this life changing pandemic.

Oh Come Holy Spirit and fill our hearts and minds. Amen.