

# **Bible Bullet**

## **(aimed at the heart)**

24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B

Isaiah 50:5-9; James 2:14-18; Mark 8:27-35

Through many years of scripture study, I have often found the commentaries written by Sr. Joan Mitchell, CSJ, for Sunday by Sunday to be particularly pertinent to our world today. This week, Sr. Joan wrote about the selection from the Gospel of Mark where Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?”

Sr. Joan offered some interesting correlations between this question and the stages of faith development. With all credit and gratitude to Sr. Joan, I offer these thoughts to you now.

The faith we receive from our parents and significant people of faith in our lives is a conventional faith. It is received, popular, conventional, and, most of all, unexamined. It is slightly out of focus as was Peter’s when he could not imagine a Messiah who would suffer and die. Peter had his own image and a suffering Messiah did not fit his expectations.

In the stages of faith development an examined and chosen faith relationship outgrows a conventional, received relationship. The death and Resurrection of Jesus forces the disciples into this stage. Who Jesus is begins to spring from a personal relationship with the real Jesus. They have experienced their Messiah in new ways and have chosen to follow.

The next stage of faith development is an agonizing faith. This faith opens us to the core of Christian paradox and the diversity of people and cultures. The believer is able to hear and hold different points of view. In this stage, the believer becomes a sign of faith to others. As Sr. Joan puts it, “They become the one they have followed, other Christs among us.” These are the disciples we see in the Acts of the Apostles. They have given up their limited images of Jesus and totally follow the Truth.

Certainly this calls us to ask ourselves which stage of faith development most closely reflects our faith. Do not be discouraged, but trust that as you continue your faith journey with a desire to follow more closely, you will indeed become one of the “other Christs” on earth.