

Sunday Homily 21A *Gabriel Wilson OSB*

Whether based on teacher assessment or an algorithm, I doubt that St Peter would have got a university place, given his slow learning. In many ways the name 'Rock' was paradoxical, because Peter rolled all over the place, most spectacularly the night of the Lord's passion. Immediately after his confession of faith his next statement ruins his previous achievement.

But...

'Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor?'

If we were the Lord's Counsellor, maybe we'd have given John the keys to the Kingdom; John was close to the Lord's heart, a holy mystic; he didn't abandon the Lord at Calvary. John was spectacularly named one of the Sons of Thunder. John seemed much more qualified.

But at Jesus' question, *'Who do you say I am?'* John was silent. It was Peter who answered and in so doing discovered his deepest identity in God's kingdom.

The truth of who Jesus is and his church were not to be dependent upon the merits or gifts or holiness of any person. Christ's church was founded upon the rock of Peter's confession, shared by all his disciples: *'You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.'*

Our vocation (who God says we are) is not founded upon the shifting sands of our age, with its own values so often built upon the ephemeral, subjective data of feelings, or what Benedict XVI called *'the eclipse of reason'*. Our deepest identity as human beings and as Christians rests upon the immovable, objective truth of the person of Jesus Christ.

In a new Dark Age when the eclipse of reason overshadows the very existence of objective truth for many people, we mustn't underestimate the witness of the daily confession of faith of our monastic vows (*or marriage vows*). We, like Peter, might be slow learners who feel inadequate against the powers of death: secular humanism, militant atheism, the rejection of institutions such as the Church, and endemic indifference to God; but we're called to be *'pegs in a sure place'*, confessing with our whole vocation who Jesus is, and that only by discovering this truth do we truly discover who God says we are and the ultimate meaning and destiny of our lives.

That confession was enough for the Lord to make a great act of faith in Peter who declared himself a sinful man. It's enough for us too, despite our sins and inadequacies. Amen