

It Takes Two

On previous Sundays Jesus has been curing people. Yet an odd thing happens in each case. He tells them, "Your faith has saved you." Which is it? Quite obviously Jesus does the healing, so why does he say their faith did it? Why didn't he just say "Go in peace, I have healed you"?

Let us seek the answer in Sunday's Gospel. This will be a roundabout way to get at an answer, so I ask you to wait for it.

Jesus is in Caesarea Philippi and the disciples are just back from their mission of preaching. Jesus asks them who people think he is.

The disciples laugh boyishly and repeat some answers they have heard. Obviously they regard these guesses as absurd. Something like this:

Believe it or not, some think you are John the Baptist returned from the dead!

The ones I talked to said you were the prophet Elijah! It was hilarious!

A few of them said you are Jeremiah or one of the other prophets! They just don't know what to make of you.

Laughter all around.

But Jesus' question had been a curve ball, and now it crosses the plate. He says abruptly, "And what about you? Who do you say I am?"

Eyes wander, feet scuff, laughter turns into a cough. The disciples' faith is still young and perhaps they are confused about it, not to mention the fact that up to this point they have not been required to profess anything out loud. Red faces.

Peter is bold, awkwardly, walking on water again, figuratively this time. He stammers out his best answer.

You ... you are ... the, uh, ... yes, uh, the ... the Son of ... you are the Christ, the Son of the living God!

Silence and then nods and relief all around.

"Simon, how great is your faith," Jesus says. "Whatever you open with this faith will stay open. Whatever your faith shuts will remain shut, not only here but in heaven." A high compliment to Peter's tottering belief status.

But does this answer the contradiction we began with? Is it Jesus or their act of faith? Jesus is always seeking a two-way liaison between himself and us, not just one-way. He wants us to have a relationship to the fullness of who he is. Besides being a charismatic leader or a good friend, he is the very reality of God's love, present in the world, wide open to loving each of us. Therefore he wants a mutual love-relationship with you and me, one in which we open up our hearts and let Godly love in.

The name of that openness to God's love on the part of a person is "faith."

Faith.

The answer is truly "Your faith has saved you." But it is faith as an opening up to Jesus' cures. These are never just a matter of him acting on his own, like a mechanic replacing spark plugs. They are love being given and love being received. The ones who were cured must have opened themselves and have at least a beginning relationship with Jesus as the loving Messiah. Healing is at last able to take root.

So, in fact, it surely is their faith that saves them, together with the love from Jesus. The healing power of that love could never get to them unless the open heart named "faith" were finally awakened in them.

John Foley, SJ

Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 23, 2020

St. Stephens Indian Mission

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Sacrament of Reconciliation & Sacrament of the Sick

You may call the office to schedule an appointment for confession. If there is no answer please leave your name and phone number and Father Jim will return your call. Please do not schedule an appointment if you are sick, please wait until you are well to protect yourself and the priest. Priest and penitent will be required to wear a mask and maintain a safe six foot distance during confession.

The Sacrament of the sick will still be available for those who are terminal and is now available to those who have an upcoming surgery. Please call the office if you or a loved one is in need of this sacrament.

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Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you Welcome!
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The purpose of St. Stephen's Indian Mission, the presence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.

Readings August 24th through August 30th:

Mon: Rv 21:9b-14; Ps 145:10-13ab, 17-18; Jn 1:45-51
 Tue: 2 Thes 2:1-3a, 14-17; Ps 96:10-13; Mt 22:23-26
 Wed: 2 Thes 3:6-10, 16-18; Ps 128:1-2, 4-5; Mt 23:27-32
 Thur: 1 Cor 1:1-9; Ps 145:2-7; Mt 24:42-51
 Fri: 1 Cor 1:17-25; Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 10-11; Mt 25:1-13
 Sat: 1 Cor 1:26-31; Ps 33:12-13, 18-19, 20-21; Mk 6:17-29
 Sun: Jer 20:7-9; Ps 63:2-6, 8-9; Rom 12:1-2; Mt 16:21-27

Parish Collection

Last week mail in collection \$450
"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Corinthians 9:7

THANK YOU to all who have continued to make financial contributions to St. Stephens Indian Mission through these most trying times! God Bless!

Mass Intentions this week

8/23:	Sunday	Keith Spoonhunter on his birthday
	Sunday	For the people
8/24:	Monday	
8/25:	Tuesday	
8/16:	Wednesday	+Fr. Fraher
8/27:	Thursday	+Irene Millar
8/28:	Friday	
8/29:	Saturday	
8/30:	Sunday	Byron H.
	Sunday	For the people

Praised be Jesus Christ! Praise Him now and always!

As we continue to celebrate Sunday Mass at St. Stephens, we are limited to 10 people in attendance as we follow the Wind River Intertribal Council's resolution. If you would like to be added to the rotating list of parishioners for Mass please call the office or email the parish office. Please remember that Bishop Steven's general dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation will remain in effect for the duration of Mass attendance restrictions. Mass is available for viewing on K2 Television at 9am and/or you may watch via livestream on St. Margaret's or Holy Rosary's FB pages.

Face masks will be required at Mass, use hand sanitizer, please refrain from exchanging handshakes during the Sign of Peace and maintain at least six feet apart from parishioners (except if you are in the same household) including processing to receive the Eucharist. If you are not feeling well and are scheduled to attend Mass please stay home and call the office so we can switch you with another parishioner until you feel well. Please keep our church family safe.

Having Mass offered for an anniversary, marriage, special occasion, or in memory of someone is a special gift. Cards are available at the office.
 Diocesan guideline is \$10.00 for Mass.

The churches at St. Josephs and St. Stephens are open daily from 8am-7pm for private prayer. No more than 10 people are to be in the church at one time.

Please pray for the family of the deceased:

+Regina Underwood

Eternal rest grant unto her O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Why do we wear masks?

“It is a simple and selfless act of love for the common good.”



Fr. Jim wearing his mask for the common good.

*Bishop Steven Biegler
 Diocese of Cheyenne*