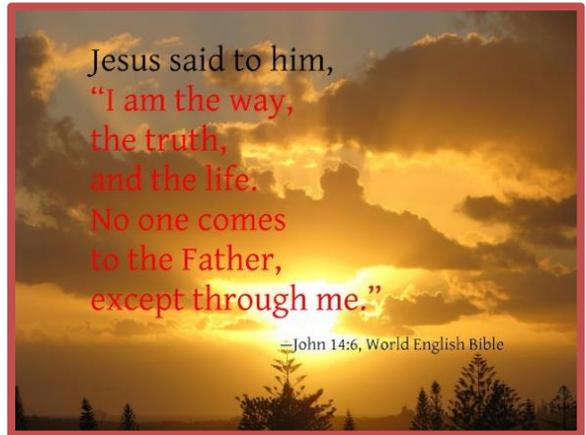
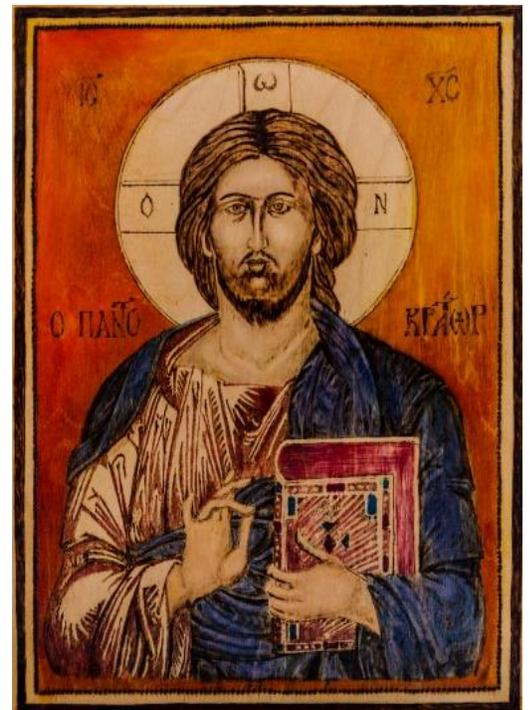


In the Gospel this week (Mark 8:27-35) Jesus asks his disciples two questions which are as relevant today as they were to his own generation: “Who do people say that I am? . . . Who do you say that I am?” Our generation could answer the first question exactly as his contemporary disciples, “The people (i.e. the popular culture) say you are one of the prophets.” The modern, politically correct, answer to the question runs something like this: “Yes, we believe Jesus was a good man, an inspirational religious figure who had many good insights into the meaning of life just like many other ‘enlightened’ religious or philosophical thinkers such as Buddha, Gandhi, Muhammad, or any number of new age gurus or founders of other religious movements or sects.” Thus Jesus, they would claim, is merely ‘one of the prophets.’ Now, as disciples of Christ, we have a major problem with this answer – Jesus himself said it was wrong! In contrast to the “peoples” answer to the question of who Jesus is, Peter responds with the right answer: “You are the Christ!” What does that mean? Ultimately, in the context of the whole Gospel narrative, it means Jesus is the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, equal in dignity and in being to God the Father, the Savior of the entire world and every person in it; He is THE Way (not a way) THE Truth and THE Life. He must be worshiped as God, and his teaching must be received and obeyed as divinely revealed. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2466, teaches us:



In Jesus Christ, the whole of God’s truth has been made manifest. “Full of grace and truth,” he came as the “light of the world,” he *is the Truth* (Jn 1:14; 8:12; cf. 14:6). “Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (Jn 12:46). The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know “the truth [that] will make you free” and that sanctifies (Jn 8:32; cf. 17:17). To follow Jesus is to live in “the Spirit of truth,” whom the Father sends in his name and who leads “into all the truth” (Jn 16:13). To his disciples Jesus teaches the unconditional love of truth: “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes or No’” (Mt 5:37).

As we know, our country was founded on Judeo-Christian principles – “In God we trust!” Today, there is a crisis of truth in our land because there is a crisis of faith and trust in God. We have now reached the point where we are attempting to create our own moral norms (e.g. legalized abortion, homosexual marriage, etc...) which are completely contrary to God’s revealed truth and devastating to the common good of our society. It doesn’t matter whether or not we have the best financial guru’s on the planet plotting and planning strategies for economic recovery, if we turn our backs on God and in effect say to him, “We no longer know who you are; we don’t want to hear your word or do things your way; we no longer trust in you; we will make a new way regardless of what you say” . . . we as a nation will not succeed – we will eventually die in our sins. So, you see, the question Jesus asks is very relevant. Historically, the answer to this question has meant the rise and fall not only of individual human beings but of civilizations. If we who have been blessed with the fullness of divine revelation look at Jesus and say, “You are just one of the prophets, one opinion among many . . .” we are headed for sad times. On the contrary if, by the mercy of God, we say with St. Peter, “You are THE Christ! THE Way, THE Truth, THE Life, THE Savior of the world,” then we are destined to enjoy the freedom, joy and peace that only the Truth can provide.



Your Servant in Christ,
 Fr. Terry Staples