

Dear Friends in Christ:

*It's not **what** you know, but **who** you know that makes the difference!* This old saying, a favorite of those in business and politics, applies in our religious life as well. I was reminded of it by the gospel reading for Mass this past Tuesday when Jesus asked his disciples two questions: *Who do people say I am?* and *Who do you say I am?* The first question is about **what** the disciples had heard about him from others, **what they knew** about him from others. The second question is about **who** they knew him to be themselves, from their own experience, who he was for them personally. They had many answers to the first question, **what they knew**. But the answer Peter gave to the second question spoke to **who** Jesus was for him, and that was the answer that made all the difference for him, *You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God*. Jesus affirmed Peter's answer as a personal revelation to him of **who** Jesus is, not just a "second hand" knowledge based only on **what** others knew of him, *flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father*. It was such personal and direct knowledge of **who** Jesus is that enabled him, and all the other disciples, to live and give their lives in service to Christ. Simply knowing **what** others were saying about Jesus would not have enabled them to live and die fully for Christ. The same holds true for us today. Knowing **who** Jesus is personally and directly holds far more power to transform and direct our lives than simply knowing **what** others say about him. There is virtually no end to **what** others have said about Jesus over the past 2000+ years. But however venerable, authoritative, and true as it all may be, it isn't enough to know what others have said without knowing Christ first hand, first heart. How do you answer Jesus' second question today, *Who do you say that I am?* Because, *It's not **what** you know, but **who** you know that makes the difference!*

Fr. Dan