



### **TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME –YEAR A**

Dear friends,

At the very end of Peter Weir’s film about *Gallipoli*, Frank Dunne (played by Mel Gibson), is racing back to the front line trench with the news that the attack has been called off. Meanwhile, Major Barton is commanded to ‘order the men over.’ In the scenes that follow each man prepares for his final moment on earth.

Just as they prepare to attack, Barton offers these words of encouragement: *“All right men, we are going. I want you to remember who you are, you are the Tenth Lighthorse Brigade. Don’t forget it! Good luck.”*

Knowing who we are gives us dignity. Being called by name presumes intimacy. So when Jesus asks the disciples in the gospel of Matthew (Mt 16: 13-20), today who do people say he is, they know he is a great prophet, but it is Peter who clearly identifies who Jesus is. “You are the Christ,” Peter said, “the Son of the living God.” This insight into Jesus’ identity is not something Peter has come to on his own: it is revelation to Peter by the Father.

This is a special moment because the backdrop to this encounter with Jesus, is Caesarea Phillipi, where there is a pagan temple to the Roman emperor who was thought of as a living god. But now, with Jesus as the foundation stone, it is Peter (Cephas- meaning ‘rock’), to whom Jesus will empower to lead his Church here on earth. This is a further turning point in the relationship between Jesus and Peter, as the Church, the Kingdom of God, is not built upon power, prestige and military strength, but upon the foundation of love.

But, Peter struggled with what it would mean for him to realise his leadership, and at Jesus’ trial before his passion and death, it is Peter’s denial of Jesus, as his friend and Saviour, by which Peter recognises his frailty and

**vulnerability as a leader. The denial was very humbling and sobering for Peter. Firstly, he learned the painful truth about himself: he wasn't as brave or as courageous as he thought he was. Secondly, he learned a wonderful truth about Jesus. That in spite of his denials, Jesus still loved him. It was that love which allowed Peter to turn a moment of pain and shame, into an hour of grace and salvation. Peter, did not fail Jesus, as he led the early Church and gave his life for his sheep.**

**Peter is a great example for us because the frailties we see in him we see in ourselves. Courage and truth fail us all at times, and yet, it is those times of honesty and insight that we can move on and push forward on our journey of faith: all, because Jesus never stops loving us.**

**Our identity and who we are is always important to us, so that we can find meaning and purpose to our lives. Most importantly, our faith in the identity of Jesus as the Son of God, enriches our call and identity when we speak and act in his name, knowing that when we fail, and fall short of the call to follow him, He is always there to forgive and love us through our struggle, so that we can once again experience his saving love.**

**[Fr Kelvin](#)**