

Dear Brothers and Sisters



Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” Peter said to him in reply, “You are the Christ.”

Jesus! O Christ! Jesus Christ!

Today these words are most frequently used as swear words. People utter them to vent anger - Jesus! Or to explode with frustration - O Christ! And to express amazement or surprise - Jesus Christ!

50 years ago, this would have been unheard of. No one would use the name of God in such a way. Today, it is commonplace. No one vents anger shouting – O Buddha No one explodes with frustration crying out – Muhammad No one expresses amazement or surprise by exclaiming – Krishna

But for Jesus there is no such reverence. In fact, there is to be no serious talk whatever about him today.

Serious talk about Jesus causes extreme embarrassment. People will talk about

God, because that is safe, very vague.

At the work, at the ball game, in the supermarket, or at the deli, people talk about God, they will even ask him to bless you.

But if someone asked Jesus to bless you...!

People will talk about the Church or the Vatican, but you must not mention Jesus Christ, at work, in school, the park, the deli, or anywhere else.

If you do, you will be recognized as an odd-ball, a religious crank, or at least as a little fanatical.

You can talk about the founders of other religions, and you will be considered enlightened. You can talk about the Dalai Lama, or Krishna, or Gandhi; but not about Jesus.

Why?

Because Jesus Christ is a very specific Word of God, And Jesus Christ is a very specific Word from God.

And in front of any specific word from God we tend to recoil. It is too threatening – renounce yourself, take up your cross. It is too personal – anyone who loses his life will find it.

We can speak about God, but God must never speak!

All who speak specific words from God meet with resistance, as does poor old Isaiah in the first reading today. And when Jesus Christ spoke a specific word about himself he too met with resistance and rejection.

Every week in the liturgy Jesus continues to speak to us. His Word is always very specific. His word is always definite.

To his Word may we offer no resistance.

Fr. Sean