

Donnybrook

22.02.17

Welcome

One of my favourite places in the Holy Land is Caesarea Philippi. It lies in the north-east of Israel, with abundant supplies of water. Nearby is snow-capped Mount Hermon, sparkling even in summer. Around Caesarea Philippi, you have beautiful streams and springs. In antiquity, it boasted a shrine to the god Pan. One of Herod's son renamed it after himself and the Roman emperor: Caesarea Philippi.

Topic

It is no surprise that question of identity should arise in such a place.

Steps

Jesus asks the disciples a direct question: Who do people say I am? Peter gives the correct response: you are the Christ. As we saw yesterday, the story of double healing is a symbol of a double journey of faith. Peter is, so to speak, only half way there. When Jesus begins to speak of his destiny, death and resurrection, Peter rebukes him and in turn Jesus rebukes Peter very firmly.

The question put to Peter is also put to us. In this scene, Jesus looks out from the pages of the Gospel and addresses disciples. then and now. Each one of us is challenged to answer the question: Who do people say I am. As it says in 1 Peter, each of us has to be able to give an account of the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15). We do this first of all for ourselves: what do I truly believe and how would I put words on it, for myself. Only after that can we begin to offer our vision to others.

Conclusion

Being able to give an account of the hope that is in us will be a vital part of the synodal pathways. As we rebuild our faith community, the faith of each one of us will be an important building block.