

When I was growing up in Watertown, my parents used to get the Milwaukee Journal delivered to their home. On Sunday morning, the comic section of the paper had a series of printed games. One of the games showed a picture; it might be a family enjoying a picnic in a park. Printed beneath the picture was a question, “Can you find the man hidden in the picture?”

Well. My sisters and I would start to look and hunt and search and at first we just saw the scene and nothing that looked like a man. Then we would start to turn the picture around first this way and then that way to get a different view. Suddenly, from the edge of a fluffy white cloud in the sky we could make out an ear, then from the green leaves of the tree we would make out a mouth and slowly the face of a man was smiling out of the picnic scene. Once the image of the man’s face was unveiled the

picnic scene was never the same again.

It is that way in our life. Being Catholic, we know through our faith that there is a divine presence hidden away in every scene of our daily life. We search for God's love, compassion, and grace and then one day we have an experience of incredible depth and intensity. In that moment we meet God up close and personal and no scene of our life is ever the same.

Certainly for me, such a moment occurred 30 years ago when I stood at the altar of St. Raphael's cathedral and celebrated the sacrament of ordination to the priesthood. In that one evening I saw God in my life and with that personal encounter my life has never been the same.

This is where Jesus' question from the gospel today can connect with all of us. "Who do you say that I

am?” is not just a question but a call for us all to identify who God is for us. This is not an easy process; it takes dedication, determination, and commitment from us.

It starts when we come to this altar and meet Christ in this sacred meal of His Body and Blood. That is why we need this experience of communal support and spiritual nourishment and yet, sadly so many excuse themselves away from the table. Participating in the Eucharist should not be a chore or a burden; it should be time of discovery when we connect with a friend, a guide, a teacher and a companion. It is a time when we answer the question “Who do you say that I am?” Without the Eucharist in our life God will seem distant; an entity that has little or no meaning for us.

When we participate in the Eucharist we see our life as an endless array of opportunities to interact with God, in

God, and through God. Like the picture in the comics,
God's smiling face is always presence, it is up to us to
discover it and when we do our life will never look the
same.