

FROM FR. DEO

August 23, 2026



Who Do You Say That I Am?

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

God is good, all the time...All the time, God is good!

I often get asked: tell us about your last name? There is an interesting difference between last names in Rwanda and other cultures. In America, a last name usually identifies the family you belong to. In Rwanda, children in the same family may have different last names, and each name often carries a meaning—a story about the family, the circumstances of birth, or what the parents hope the child will become.

In my family, my siblings and I have different last names. My name, Mbonyumugenzi, comes from *mbonye*, meaning “I see,” and *umugenzi*, meaning “companion” or “fellow traveler.” When I was born, my father said, “I see another life companion.” To truly know someone and where they come from, the last name is not enough; you also need to know their family—especially their parents and the people they resemble and, ultimately, build a relationship with them.

When Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” and “who do you say that I am?”, He was not simply asking for information but inviting them to reflect on their knowledge of and relationship with Him.

Two Sundays ago, when Peter walked on water and began to sink, Jesus told him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Mt 14:31). Today, that same Peter is praised: “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah” (Mt 16:17). What changed?

Peter opened his heart to God’s revelation and confessed, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Peter is not simply giving Jesus a name or title; he is recognizing His true identity. His confession of faith reveals his growth in his relationship with Jesus. In turn, Jesus gives Peter a new identity and mission: “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.” There is something beautiful here: Jesus tells Peter who he is by telling him what he is called to become. His new name comes with a new mission.

The same is true for us. Our identity is not simply defined by our name, our family or our profession. Although our faith often begins through the witness of parents, catechists, priests, teachers, and friends, it must become personal. God knows us personally, calls us by name, and gives our lives a purpose. And sometimes, like Peter, we discover who we truly are when we discover who Jesus is for us. Let us ask ourselves: Who is Jesus to me, and who am I because I belong to Him? Is He simply someone we know about, or is He truly the center of our lives?

Parish News: Join me in welcoming Our Lady of Czestochowa back to our church! I warmly welcome all our brothers and sisters who are visiting our parish for the first time or returning as we honor our Blessed Mother. May her presence draw us closer to her Son, Jesus.

Our Lady of Czestochowa, Pray for Us!

See you in church!

In Christ,

Fr. Deo.