

Homily based on the readings from May 30, 2026 (Jude 17, 20b-25;
Mark 11.27-33)

By what authority are you doing these things? Today's Gospel raises a basic, yet profound question. The chief priests and their allies, of course, are simply trying to ensnare Jesus in his own words. Jesus, being who he is, has no difficulty evading their trap. Despite their deceitfulness, though, the question they are asking is fundamentally important – what *is* the source of Jesus' authority, and what are its implications for the rest of humanity?

Holy Scripture provides a definitive answer to this question, although it comes much later in the narrative – after Our Lord has been crucified and has risen from the dead. At the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew, as he is bidding farewell to his beloved disciples, Jesus gives what has come to be known as the *Great Commission*:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

All authority in heaven and on earth: the word Jesus uses here – *authority* or, in Greek, ἐξουσία [exousia] – is exactly the same term employed by the chief priests. Jesus finally answers their question, but on his own terms. His authority, which comes directly from his own divinity, is absolute and complete. He does not owe allegiance to anyone else, but rather – by his very *existence* – reigns supreme over heaven and earth.

Christ's explanation, however, comes with an important corollary: *[g]o therefore and make disciples of all nations*. Although primary authority continues to rest with Jesus – as it always must – he has deputized his followers to spread the Gospel on his behalf. The word *apostle* literally

means *ambassador* – someone who is sent out on behalf of a higher power. The original Apostles went out into the world, proclaiming the saving truth of Jesus Christ to all the nations. Many of the people the Apostles encountered presumably asked about the source of *their* authority. The answer, of course, is the authority of Christ himself – our Risen and Ascended King – which he chose to impart to his one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

The Apostles' ministry, as we know, is passed down and perpetuated through their modern-day successors, the bishops of the Catholic Church. For the rest of us – those who are not entrusted with this awesome responsibility – we must never lose sight of the incredible gift we have been given. Even though Jesus has been physically absent for almost 2000 years, he remains present with us – *always, to the close of the age* – through his teachings, through his sacraments, and through the authority he *continues* to exercise through the ambassadors who faithfully govern in his name.