



## Gospel Mt 16:13-20

*You are Peter, to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.' Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

## Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

Jesus had a sense of humour! Simon, son of Jonah, was far from being a rock solid supporter of Jesus. So Jesus gave him the nickname 'Rocky' which in the Greek is Petros.

Jesus puns with the nickname: 'You are Rocky and upon this rock I will build *my* church.' The natural personality of shifting sands was being transformed by the blessing just given (the only blessing bestowed upon an apostle by Jesus).

Notice that Jesus only makes promises about '*my* church', not a church shaped by human imagination, e.g. modes of Roman Imperial rule or with a Eurocentric mindset.

Fortunately, we have a successor of St Peter responding to our Risen Lord's command to St Francis of Assisi, 'Rebuild *my* church'.

We could pause for a moment to pray that the Risen Lord showers the 265th successor of St Peter with every blessing so that the Church of Jesus the Christ continues to prevail over the forces of death which threaten humanity.

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# The Living Word

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

23 August 2020

## First Reading Is 22:19-23

*I place the key of the House of David upon his shoulder.*

Thus says the Lord of hosts to Shebna, the master of the palace:

I dismiss you from your office,  
I remove you from your post,  
and the same day I call on my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiyah.

I invest him with your robe,  
gird him with your sash,  
entrust him with your authority;  
and he shall be a father  
to the inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and to the House of Judah.

I place the key of the House of David  
on his shoulder;  
should he open, no one shall close,  
should he close, no one shall open.  
I drive him like a peg  
into a firm place;  
he will become a throne of glory  
for his father's house.

## Responsorial Psalm

Ps 137:1-3. 6. 8. R. v.8

*(R.) Lord, your love is eternal;  
do not forsake the work of your hands.*

- I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,  
you have heard the words of my mouth.  
Before the angels I will bless you.  
I will adore before your holy temple. *(R.)*

- I thank you for your faithfulness and love  
which excel all we ever knew of you.  
On the day I called, you answered;  
you increased the strength of my soul. *(R.)*
- The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly  
and the haughty he knows from afar.  
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,  
discard not the work of your hands. *(R.)*

## Second Reading Rom 11:33-36

*From him, through him, and in him are all things.*

How rich are the depths of God – how deep his wisdom and knowledge – and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods! Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him; all is by him and for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen.

## Gospel Acclamation Mt 16:18

*Alleluia, alleluia!*

*You are Peter, the rock on which I will  
build my Church;  
the gates of hell will not hold out  
against it.*

*Alleluia!*

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