

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!

GOSPEL

Mt 16:13-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

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.

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.****A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL**

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

27 AUGUST 2023

GOD CAN WORK THROUGH FRAILTY

Some years ago, a group of scholars from various Christian traditions examined the role of Peter that emerges from the New Testament. Despite the diversity in the texts and the traditions represented by the scholars themselves, there was general agreement that Peter played a critical role in the birth of early Christianity. While the New Testament writers stress his importance, they never avoid facing the complex reality of the man himself. Peter was the rock that crumbled and cracked under pressure when confronted after Jesus' arrest. Nonetheless, after the resurrection his faith did not waver, and he would justify Jesus' belief and trust in him.

In the concluding section of Romans 11, Paul is led to praise God for the unexpected ways in which God's saving plan for all humanity had come to fruition. While some in Israel had not come to believe in Jesus this had opened the way for the Gentiles. Gentile Christians had become the unforeseen means by which some of the people of Israel would be prompted to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Paul invites the Christians of Rome to join with him in wonder at the ingenious ways in which God always opens a new possibility for us, often despite ourselves.

That God can work through the frailty of Peter and the hardness of heart of some of the people of Israel can serve as a source of encouragement for us all. Rather than leave us disheartened God's word provides us with a firm basis for hope.

Christopher Monaghan CP**FIRST READING**

Isa 22:19-23

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

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 Hilkiah.

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.

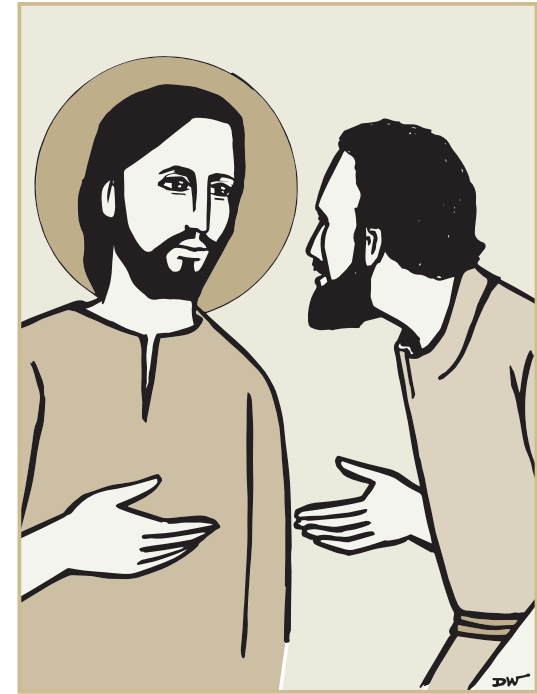
■ **The word of the Lord.****RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

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

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

1. 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.**

2. 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.**



3. 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

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

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.

■ **The word of the Lord.**