

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 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.

The Gospel of the Lord

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O Lord, who gained for yourself a people by adoption through the one sacrifice offered once for all, bestow graciously on us, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace in your Church.

Through Christ our Lord.

AMEN

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

We proclaim your Death, O Lord and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord; you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Complete within us, O Lord, we pray, the healing work of your mercy and graciously perfect and sustain us, so that in all things we may please you. Through Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

REFLECTION

Like last week's gospel, this week's story takes place in a region that was outside predominantly Jewish territory. Caesarea Philippi (north of Galilee and in the region of modern day Syria) had long been a centre of pagan worship. It was used originally by the Canaanites as a site of worship; the Greeks built a temple to one of their gods there; in 20 BCE Herod the Great built a temple to Caesar Augustus; and after his death, Herod's son, Phillip, renamed the city Caesarea Philippi after Tiberius Caesar and himself. It is intriguing that Matthew's gospel chooses such a site as the location for such a significant revelation of faith.

Jesus asks the disciples who people say he is. They report that people associate Jesus with one of the great prophets of Jewish tradition. By people identifying Jesus with other great prophets they were projecting Jesus into the same mould as that prophet. What they were saying was that Jesus will be a great leader in the style of John the Baptist, or Elijah or even Jeremiah. The expectation of a messiah was running very high at the time of Jesus and everyone had their own idea about what that messiah would be like – usually aligned with some previous leader. They didn't seem to understand that Jesus was breaking the mould and was not going to fit in with any of those expectations. To see him as one of the great prophets come again is always going to be an inadequate understanding of Jesus as messiah.

When Jesus pushes the disciples for their own ideas, it is Simon Peter who speaks up and identifies Jesus as being the Son of the living God. Making a play on Peter's name (in Greek, petros = Peter and petra = rock), Jesus states that hereafter, Simon Peter will be known as Peter and upon the rock of his profession of faith the church will be built.

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TWENTY— FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - YEAR A

23RD AUGUST 2020

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

COLLECT

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

AMEN

FIRST READING

A reading from the first book of the Isaiah
Isaiah 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 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

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. (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

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 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.

The word of the Lord

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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!