

Daily Reflections



THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP

By Sr. Katherine "Kit" Gray, CSJ

Introduction

Today is the feast of the Chair of St. Peter, Apostle. It celebrates Peter's importance among the first apostles and in the early Church and his recognition as the "first pope." In 1960, Pope John XXIII tried to initiate a universal feast date; however, it was not until 1969 that it became part of the liturgical calendar. In addition to the recognition of authority in the Church, today's feast also expresses Church unity.

A chair can symbolize authority because it has been used throughout history to convey power, status, and leadership. In Matthew 23:2, the Scribes and Pharisees are described as sitting in Moses' seat—a metaphorical term for the position of authority in teaching the Law. In Mark 27:19, Jesus is described as sitting on the judgment seat. Chairs were originally used as thrones by rulers and the upper classes to convey authority. The primary church of a bishop is called a "cathedral" from the Latin word *cathedra*, meaning "chair." In civil society, the word "chair" is used to refer to other positions of authority, such as the chairperson of a meeting or a department head.

The Church interprets this passage as the founding of the church by Jesus. Matthew is the only Gospel writer who uses the word “church” (Greek, ekklesia=assembly, those called). The symbol of the keys given to Peter, the image of the “rock” as a firm foundation, and the promise that evil would never bring it down come together in a strong image of the church as the chosen people of God. (cf Little Rock Catholic Study Bible)

Today's Gospel

*When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi
he asked his disciples,
“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”
They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah,
still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”
He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”
Simon Peter said in reply,
“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah.
For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.
And so I say to you, you are Peter,
and upon this rock I will build my Church,
and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.
I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven.
Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;
and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

MATTHEW 16:13-19



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For Pondering

- What are your thoughts and/or feelings about a feast celebrating authority?
- How does Peter's profession of faith in Jesus, "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," relate to the ministry Jesus gives him?
- What does leadership/authority mean to you?

- What qualities of leadership do you value in yourself? In others?
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For Prayer

Prayer for Servant Leadership

*Lord,
We thank you because you have raised up, anointed and appointed people
to serve and lead your Church.*

*What an honor and privilege it is to be entrusted with this responsibility.
Reassured by the knowledge of your abiding presence,
may our leaders continue to have the courage to reach out and support one
another,
to stand firm in what is true,
to decrease when others should increase and to lead with vision and
compassion.*

*Lord, we thank you for your enduring presence and wisdom
that illuminates the thoughts, decisions and actions of our leaders,
for your endless patience, compassion and love.*

*Help our leaders to remain focused on you,
to live and to lead as humble, grateful, assured, and generous servants.
To live and to lead as an example.
To live and to lead as faithful followers of Jesus.*

*As we pray for our leaders, we also pray this prayer for ourselves.
In our relationships with one another, help us to have the same mindset as
Jesus who, despite being in very nature God, humbled himself to full
humanness. To serve others. Not for personal gain but so that others would
know you.*

*By your grace, may our example, our words, our actions and our reactions
point people to you too.*

*Help us Lord, we pray
Amen.*

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