

# SAINT PETER – THE ROCK

✘ Jesus asked his disciples: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others, Elijah, and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Then Jesus wanted to know their personal opinion and He asked them: “But who do YOU say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, **“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God”**. It was a true revelation to Peter by the Father in heaven.

Let us recall the incident at the lake of Genesareth where people gathered to hear the word of God. Jesus got into the boat of Simon to preach to the people. How symbolic was it when the Lord

*St. Peter – Peter Paul Rubens*

chose Simon’s boat and no one else’s to sit and proclaim His truth! God’s plan was being gradually unfolded. “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Mt.16.18,19). It is aptly said: ‘Where there is Peter, there is the Church.’

When we live God’s word, God will reveal His secrets to us. In the lake of Genesareth, Peter worked the whole night to catch fish but caught nothing. But when Jesus asked him to ‘put out the net into the deep waters for a catch’, he obeyed. Though an efficient fisherman, Simon did not argue with Him. Thereafter committing himself to the given mission ‘to catch people’, **PETER LEFT EVERYTHING and followed Jesus.** (cfr. Lk. 5. 1-11). It was an expression of his total obedience to God’s word and immediate response to His call which made the heavenly Father give the great revelation about Jesus to Peter! Jesus considered the unshakable faith and sincere

**loyalty of Peter to be as a rock.** We too are called to have this faith and loyal commitment to the Lord. The Catechism of Catholic Church teaches that 'faith is man's response to God's word' (CCC. 26, 166). "By the saving word of God, faith is nourished in the heart of the believers. The proclamation does not stop with a teaching; it elicits the response of faith as **consent and commitment**" (CCC. 1102). Peter was an example of this faith to all the flock of Christ.

From the early Church, Peter was the Apostle who was leading the 'members of the household of God' (Eph. 2.19), the Church. On Pentecost day Peter stood up and boldly proclaimed to the crowd: "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem,...you that are Israelites,... let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds and power, wonders and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know – this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power....Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah (Christ), this Jesus whom you crucified". (cfr. Acts. 2, 14-36)

"Day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." (2,47). Due to weak human nature, factions, confusion and disagreements did come at times among the believers; it was Peter who was the leader of the councils where they discussed the matter. While writing the Jerusalem Council's letter to the believers, he wrote: "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." Yes, it is the Holy Spirit of God who ultimately leads the Church through weak human instruments. In the words of St. Paul: "**Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from**

**us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3, 4-6).**

It was Peter whom the Lord used to give the good news to the Gentiles (Cornelius and others Acts 10).

Several heresies and wrong doctrines have come in the Church due to human weakness of rebellion, licentiousness, strife, quarrels and dissensions but the Chair of Peter remained. All others disappeared in course of time. **So many world powers have tried to destroy the Church. But the Church of Christ has survived all these because it is ‘founded on Jesus Christ himself as the corner stone, and built upon the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets’ (Eph.2,20).** In accordance with the eternal purpose that God has carried out in Jesus Christ our Lord, through the church, founded on Peter’s faith, the wisdom of God in its rich variety is being made known to the rulers and authorities in heavenly places’ (cfr. Eph. 3, 10 – 11).

In the words of St. Jerome: “We must abide in that Church, which was founded by Jesus on the Apostles”. The Catholic Church of today is one with the Church of the Apostles in origin, doctrine and mission. There is no break in the line of succession from St. Peter whom the Lord entrusted the mission of ‘feeding and tending the sheep’ (cfr. Jn. 2, 15-17).

Down the centuries, God is speaking to His Church through Peter and his successors. **“Whoever listens to you, listens to me and whoever rejects you rejects me” (Lk. 10.16).**

P. JMK + Mary Pereira