

# SUNDAY GOSPEL BIBLE SHARING



**Wednesday August 23<sup>th</sup> for the 21<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**OPENING PRAYER :** God of Creation, you have placed certain persons in roles of authority in our world, Church, and homes. Give these brothers and sisters wise and understanding hearts that they may guide us well. Breathe your Holy Spirit upon us as we gather to share life and your Word. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL**

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

### **Gospel Reading      Matthew 16:13-20**

**13<sub>h</sub>** When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi\* he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

**14<sub>i</sub>** They replied, “Some say John the Baptist,\* others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” **15** He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

**16\*<sub>j</sub>** Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

**17** 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.

**18<sub>k</sub>** 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.

**19<sub>l</sub>** 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.”

**20\*<sub>m</sub>** Then he strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was the Messiah.

\* [16:13–20] The Marcan confession of Jesus as Messiah, made by Peter as spokesman for the other disciples (Mk 8:27–29; cf. also Lk 9:18–20), is modified significantly here. The confession

is of Jesus both as Messiah and as Son of the living God (Mt 16:16). Jesus' response, drawn principally from material peculiar to Matthew, attributes the confession to a divine revelation granted to Peter alone (Mt 16:17) and makes him the rock on which Jesus will build his church (Mt 16:18) and the disciple whose authority in the church on earth will be confirmed in heaven, i.e., by God (Mt 16:19).

\* [16:13] Caesarea Philippi: situated about twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee in the territory ruled by Philip, a son of Herod the Great, tetrarch from 4 B.C. until his death in A.D. 34 (see note on Mt 14:1). He rebuilt the town of Paneas, naming it Caesarea in honor of the emperor, and Philippi ("of Philip") to distinguish it from the seaport in Samaria that was also called Caesarea. Who do people say that the Son of Man is?: although the question differs from the Marcan parallel (Mk 8:27: "Who...that I am?"), the meaning is the same, for Jesus here refers to himself as the Son of Man (cf. Mt 16:15).

\* [16:14] John the Baptist: see Mt 14:2. Elijah: cf. Mal 3:19; Sir 48:10; and see note on Mt 3:4. Jeremiah: an addition of Matthew to the Marcan source.

\* [16:16] The Son of the living God: see Mt 2:15; 3:17. The addition of this exalted title to the Marcan confession eliminates whatever ambiguity was attached to the title Messiah. This, among other things, supports the view proposed by many scholars that Matthew has here combined his source's confession with a post-resurrectional confession of faith in Jesus as Son of the living God that belonged to the appearance of the risen Jesus to Peter; cf. 1 Cor 15:5; Lk 24:34.

\* [16:17] Flesh and blood: a Semitic expression for human beings, especially in their weakness. Has not revealed this...but my heavenly Father: that Peter's faith is spoken of as coming not through human means but through a revelation from God is similar to Paul's description of his recognition of who Jesus was; see Gal 1:15-16, "...when he [God]...was pleased to reveal his Son to me...."

\* [16:18] You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: the Aramaic word *kēpā*' meaning rock and transliterated into Greek as *Cēphas* is the name by which Peter is called in the Pauline letters (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:4; Gal 1:18; 2:9, 11, 14) except in Gal 2:7-8 ("Peter"). It is translated as *Petros* ("Peter") in Jn 1:42. The presumed original Aramaic of Jesus' statement would have been, in English, "You are the Rock (*Kēpā*) and upon this rock (*kēpā*) I will build my church." The Greek text probably means the same, for the difference in gender between the masculine noun *petros*, the disciple's new name, and the feminine noun *petra* (rock) may be due simply to the unsuitability of using a feminine noun as the proper name of a male. Although the two words were generally used with slightly different nuances, they were also used interchangeably with the same meaning, "rock." Church: this word (Greek *ekklēsia*) occurs in the gospels only here and in Mt 18:17 (twice). There are several possibilities for an Aramaic original. Jesus' church means the community that he will gather and that, like a building, will have Peter as its solid foundation. That function of Peter consists in his being witness to Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. The gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it: the netherworld (Greek *Hadēs*, the abode of the dead) is conceived of as a walled city whose gates will not close in upon the church of Jesus, i.e., it will not be overcome by the power of death.

\* [16:19] The keys to the kingdom of heaven: the image of the keys is probably drawn from Is 22:15-25 where Eliakim, who succeeds Shebna as master of the palace, is given "the key of the house of David," which he authoritatively "opens" and "shuts" (Mt 22:22). Whatever you

bind...loosed in heaven: there are many instances in rabbinic literature of the binding-loosing imagery. Of the several meanings given there to the metaphor, two are of special importance here: the giving of authoritative teaching, and the lifting or imposing of the ban of excommunication. It is disputed whether the image of the keys and that of binding and loosing are different metaphors meaning the same thing. In any case, the promise of the keys is given to Peter alone. In Mt 18:18 all the disciples are given the power of binding and loosing, but the context of that verse suggests that there the power of excommunication alone is intended. That the keys are those to the kingdom of heaven and that Peter's exercise of authority in the church on earth will be confirmed in heaven show an intimate connection between, but not an identification of, the church and the kingdom of heaven.

\* [16:20] Cf. Mk 8:30. Matthew makes explicit that the prohibition has to do with speaking of Jesus as the Messiah; see note on Mk 8:27-30.

## **Thoughts and reflection on the Gospel Passage**

### **QUESTIONS FOR SHARING**

1. Jesus asks his disciples the question: "Who do you say I am?" How would you answer this question?
2. It has been said: 'God does not call the qualified, but he qualifies those he calls.' Have you seen that work in your life?
3. Name one thing today's Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed and act on.

### **Commentary**

The Gospel opens with Jesus asking the disciples "Who do people say that I am?" They respond that people see him as a prophet. Then Jesus asks the disciples who they think he is. Peter, in a moment of a great insight, speaks up on behalf of the other disciples: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Peter probably says more than he knows.

Then Jesus shifts the focus from himself to Peter. After Peter names the identity and mission of Jesus, Jesus unfolds the identity and mission of Peter. Jesus confers a new title on Peter. Going forward, Peter will be the foundation stone of a new people (the Church). This Gospel shows that the primacy of Peter (which each of his successors holds) is not something that was invented by the Church later on. It goes back to the mind and will of Jesus himself. The failures of popes throughout history do not contradict Jesus' promise that "the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church." Peter himself failed the Lord. In giving authority and primacy to the one who will deny him, Jesus is communicating to us that his Church was not established on human strength, but on his own divine love and faithfulness. The Church's true foundation is Christ himself. The Pope is servant, not his substitute. The words "binding" and "loosing" refers to the Church's

authority to legislate, e.g., to name behaviors that lead to life and to forbid behaviors that lead us away from Christ. In addition the power to bind and loose refers to the Church's authority to excommunicate a member just as Paul did. (See 1Cor 5:5). Jesus forbids the disciples to speak of this event because it would be misunderstood prior to Pentecost when the Holy Spirit will enlighten the people.

**IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?**

**IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?**

**CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer**

Bible Sharing Room 5 and Zoom  
Starting Aug 23 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm EST Weekly on Wednesday  
notes

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting  
Time: August 23, 2023 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZlkd-qgrj8qG9Rt4LoXWaku9w9Mo6AzLDCs/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGupzspEtSRsBiHRpwAHYigb\\_zziClfjfpviEvJDBhkYwjjb\\_UbH7opMcL8](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZlkd-qgrj8qG9Rt4LoXWaku9w9Mo6AzLDCs/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGupzspEtSRsBiHRpwAHYigb_zziClfjfpviEvJDBhkYwjjb_UbH7opMcL8)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86903804010?pwd=MGJydS9qSW9LSzNGblZSM2xZcWpGZz09>

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Passcode: 086586

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