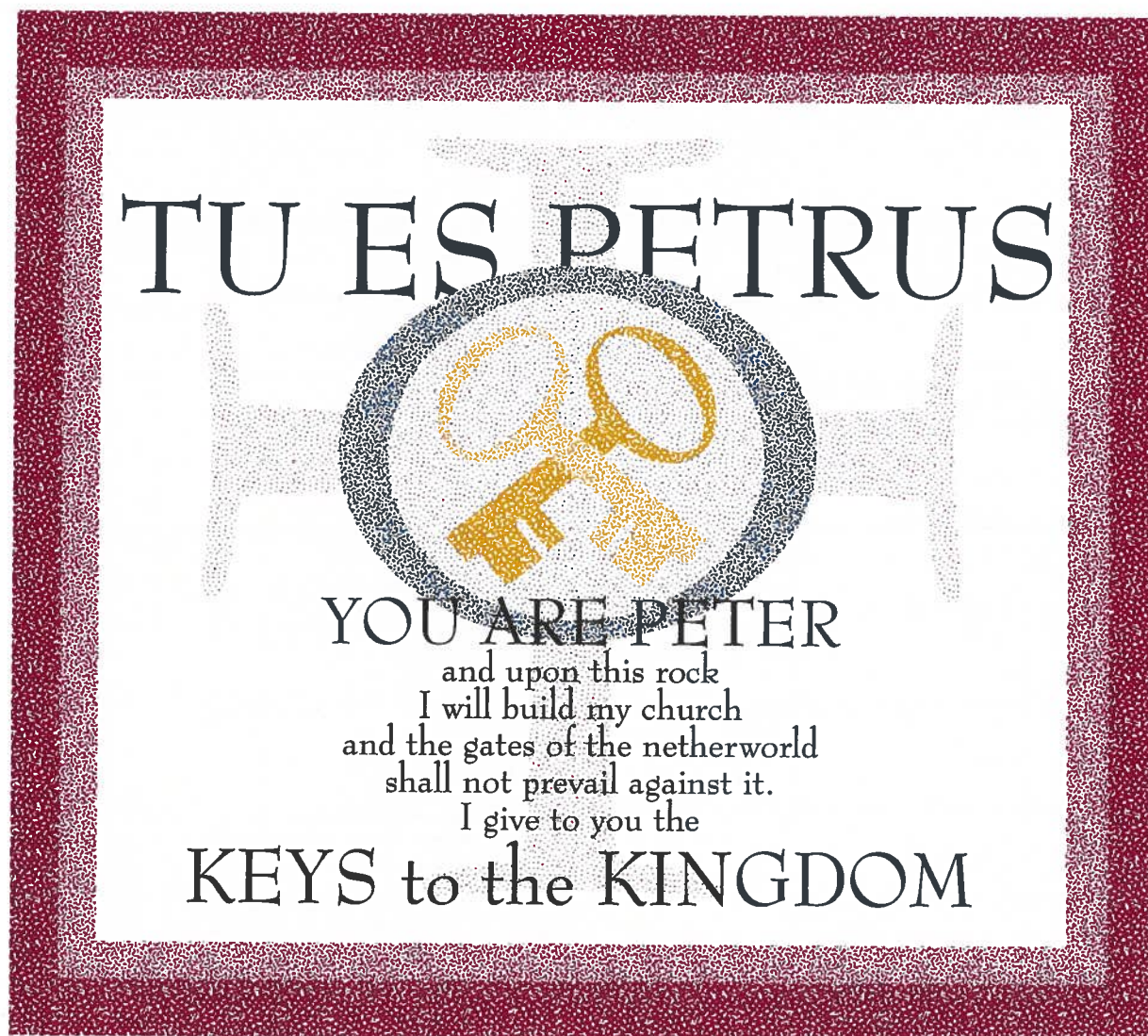


The Roman Catholic Parishes of
Sacred Heart, Goodrich
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher
St. James the Apostle, Irwin

21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

AUGUST 22-23, 2026



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Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 5:00 pm	Sun. 10:30 am
Sacred Heart	Sun. 7:30 am	
St. James	Sun. 9:00 am	

Confessions:

St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 4:15 pm—4:45pm
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Church Mailing Address:

207 E. 5th Street

Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable - "The winds symbolize the temptations and persecution the Church will suffer due to lack of love. For, as Saint Augustine says, when love grows cold, the sea becomes rougher and the boat begins to founder. Yet the wind, the storm, the waves, and the darkness will fail to put it off course and wreck it. "

—Saint Thomas Aquinas

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time				August 29-30, 2026
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, August 29 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, August 30 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, August 30 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, August 30 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Father Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Brett Buza Bob Schultz Dave Emling Brent Fulton	David Kirkpatrick Kyle Ferris	Dennis O'Connor Dave Ladehoff Arlen Hansen Jerry Ogrentz	Dustin Truetner Larry Wolles Kim Smicker Erik Wheeler
Lector	Bobbi Buza	Mike Hertz	Kelly Buente	Diane Long
Eucharistic Minister				
Servers				Gavin Down
Greeters			Greeter—D. Bernicky R. Leader—Rita Thiesen	Julie Splear

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, August 24 (SMM)

8:00 am +Jim Jepsen (William/Diane Wilcox)

Tuesday, August 25 (SJ)

8:00 am + Rhonda Harris (Terri/Jerry Weakley)

Wednesday, August 26

+ Gerald Bernicky (His Family)

Friday, August 28 (SMM)

8:00am +Laura Jensen (Carol Jamnik)

Saturday, August 29 (SMM)

5:00 pm +JR Matern (Bev Buckley)

+Inez Crawford (Pat Gray)

Sunday, August 30

7:30 am (SH) +Betty Koval (Jackie Cross & family)

+Roberta Klasta (Viator Buckley family)

9:00 am (SJ) +Virginia Gadbois (Dallas/Joyce Ferris)

+Deceased members of the Forsythe Family
(Dan/Chris Forsythe)

10:30 am (SMM) For All the Parish Family

Question of the week—

Who do I say that Jesus is?

Looking Ahead

Monday, August 24—K of C meeting 7pm at St. James

Monday, Sept. 7—Herscher Labor Day Celebration

Wednesday, Sept. 9—Adult Ed Class at 6pm at SMM

Sunday, September 13—Religious Ed Begins at all three parishes

Saturday, Sept. 19—Bus Trip to Mundelein Seminary

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550

Deacon – Ron Gagnon— rjgckg@aol.com

Home—815-933-4077

Parish Email – smm_sja_sh@yahoo.com

TriParish web page – www.triparishcatholics.org

Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities

Tri Parish Church office—Tanhya Osenga 426-2550

Julie Bisaillon 426-2550

Bulletin – Debbie Jensen - 426-2550 debjen04@gmail.com

Religious Education –

St. MM – Jill Fulton jfulton.stmm@gmail.com

Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015

St. James—Tanhya Osenga tosenga81@gmail.com

Parish Nurse –

Prayer Line—

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 jdstreefarms1@gmail.com

Collections Weekend of August 15-16, 2026

St. Margaret Mary—\$2,235

St. James—\$3,271

Sacred Heart— \$1,467

Thank you for your generosity!

Gospel Shorts The Hiking Place of Power

It is an open secret that the morale in the church today is not strong. The decline in membership and resources experienced by virtually every church body has resulted in what is called a failure of nerve. There is no easy answer to this predicament but there is a way by which we can move out of this into a new confidence. It is a way which is set out in Matthew 16:13-20. It begins with a new depth of commitment to Jesus Christ, and this results in the creation of a new and redemptive community, and these two realities produce confidence. This is the way we explore through this New Testament passage.

Parish News:

All Parishes—

- ⇒ K of C meeting Monday, Aug. 24 at 7pm at SJ
- ⇒ Tuesday morning masses will be at St. James until further notice.
- ⇒ Tri Parish Prayer Group will meet each Monday at 7 pm at St James church
- ⇒ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.

St. Margaret Mary-

St. James-

- ⇒ Sacred Heart—
- ⇒ Important Notice— Weekday masses on Tuesday will be held at St. James.



Final Week to Sign Up for Adult Ed Classes

Our adult ed classes will resume in September, the topic will be The Gospel of St. Mark. If you would like to attend these classes, please call the office (815-426-2550) and register so we can

order the books. The start date will be Wednesday, September 9 at 6:00 pm at St. Margaret Mary .



Please pray for the repose of the soul of

+Jackie Eberle

mother of Rob (Gayle), Mike, & Scott (Christie)

Landeck , and Barb (Geno) Dal Cerro

grandmother of twelve and

great grandmother of seventeen.

May Jackie and all the faithful departed rest in eternal peace.

Our sincere sympathy to Jackie's family, and friends.



Religious Education Kickoff Sunday September 13

*SJ—registration after
Mass followed by class*

SMM—Registration online for K-8 students via the link found on the private FB page. Class kickoff on Sunday, September 13 at 9:30 am New families, please email Jill jfulton.stmm@gmail.com and she will send you the link

SH—Turn in registration and class begins on Sunday, Sept. 13



A Tri-Parish outing is in the works! A bus trip to Mundelein Seminary is being planned for Saturday, September 19. It will be a day of touring the campus, the chapels on the grounds, learning about the history of Mundelein Seminary and of course a delicious lunch.

If you are interested, please call the church office as soon as you can commit so we will know what bus to get. The bus will leave St. Margaret Mary parking lot . The exact time has not been set yet.

University of Saint Mary of the Lake

Mundelein Seminary



*Join us as we tour this
beautiful campus!*



Welcome into the faith to
Asher Thomas Blanchette
son of Amanda & Alex Blanchette
who was baptized at St. Margaret Mary
on August 15, 2026

Saint of the week: St. Monica (August 27) was raised in a Christian family. She was given in marriage to a bad-tempered, adulterous pagan named Patricius. She became the mother of two, one of whom is Saint Augustine of Hippo whose writings about her are the primary source of our information about Monica. She prayed constantly for the conversion of her husband (who converted on his death bed), and of her son (who converted after a wildlife). Monica was the spiritual student of Saint Ambrose of Milan and a reformed alcoholic.



Obscure saint of the week: St. David Lewis (August 27) His mother, Margaret Prichard, was Catholic, but his father, Morgan Lewis, was a Protestant school headmaster. David, the youngest of nine children, was raised Protestant. He was reconciled to Catholicism in Paris at age 16. David studied at the English College in Rome in 1638 and was ordained in 1642. David joined the Jesuits in 1645. He became the spiritual director of the English College in Rome. He returned to Wales in 1648 and spent over 30 years ministering to persecuted Catholics from the village of Cym, living in a farmhouse that served as a base for missionary work. During the increased persecutions triggered by the *Titus Oates Plot*, David was betrayed by a servant and arrested in November 1678 at Llantarnan, Wales. He was condemned in March 1679 for the crimes of being a priest and saying Mass. He was imprisoned and interrogated in London, then returned to Usk. St. David Lewis was one of the *Forty Martyrs of England and Wales*.



Understanding the Sacraments Part 1

Order of Christian Funerals

Folks, I would like to educate the congregation on what the sacraments are and what they are not. Realize the sacraments belong to the Church and I just administer them. I wanted to start with the order of Christian funerals. Funerals are not a sacrament but most often take place within a sacrament.

The order of Christian funerals is three liturgies which form the order. The first liturgy is called the Vigil for the Deceased, or more commonly known as the wake. This phase is about the person who has passed, their family and friends, and the community that remains behind. The Church tells us: "At the vigil the Christian community keeps watch with the family in prayer to the God of mercy and finds strength in Christ's presence. It is the first occasion among the funeral rites for the solemn reading of the word of God. In this time of loss, the family and the community turn to God's word as the source of faith and hope, as light and life in the face of darkness and death. Consoled by the redeeming word of God and by the abiding presence of Christ and his Spirit, the assembly at the vigil calls upon the Father of mercy to receive the deceased into the kingdom of light and peace." The Vigil or Wake is the time and place to celebrate your loved one's life and the impact he or she had on the family, the community, and the Church. It is also the best time and place to have a eulogy.

Where to conduct the wake? In recent years we have been asked to have the wake on the premises. We allow the visitation to be held in the parish hall but not in the church itself. While we can host the wake, remember we do not have a custodian who can set up and clean up for the wake. The optimal place to hold the wake is at the funeral home as they have the support staff who can tend to you and your guests. Please refer to the parish website for more information.

The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

When Jesus arrived in the villages of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "What are people saying about who the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some think he is John the Baptizer, some say Elijah, some Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."

He pressed them, "And how about you? Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter said, "You're the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus came back, "God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn't get that answer out of books or from teachers. My Father in heaven, God himself, let you in on this secret of who I really am. And now I'm going to tell you who you are, really are. You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.

"And that's not all. You will have complete and free access to God's kingdom, keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is yes in heaven. A no on earth is no in heaven."

He swore the disciples to secrecy. He made them promise they would tell no one that he was the Messiah. (from Matthew 16).

LORD
your love
is eternal



Questions Catholics Ask

How did the veneration of relics get started?

A relic is an object kept in tribute to a holy person. Some relics are body parts such as bone chips or teeth. Others are items once belonging to the person, most often snips of clothing. Catholics aren't alone in collecting relics. Other religions like Buddhism employ them. People of faith backgrounds that permit it keep remains of loved ones in an urn on the mantle (See here for Vatican instruction on Catholic burial, cremation). I have a shirt that belonged to my dad, which I still wear. Relics are a traditional way of keeping in touch with someone special.

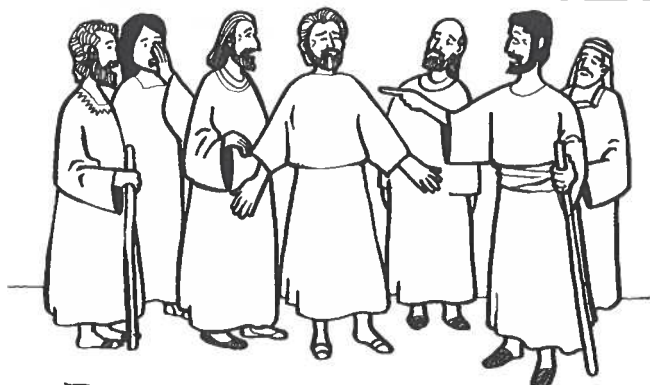
Catholic relics are as old as the church. Martyrdom was a frequent if not typical cause of Christian death. The faithful collected the martyrs' remains, often in pieces, for secret burial in places like catacombs. When available, the instrument of death was spirited off as well. Think: relics from the True Cross. Christians gathered at martyrs' tombs to celebrate Eucharist. When the persecutions finally ceased, churches were erected on the gravesites. Christians considered burial near a martyr a privilege. A tug-of-war over these bodies became typical; some were exhumed and re-interred on the properties of those who could afford it. In the Middle Ages, Crusaders pilfered lots of relics and carried them to Europe.

Relics were catechetically useful. They spurred interest in the saint whose virtues might be imitated. In 410, a council in Carthage ruled that saints' shrines had to contain authentic relics or be destroyed. In 767, a Nicaean council determined that every altar must contain a relic or Mass could not be celebrated on it. This decree echoes the original practice of celebrating Mass on the graves of martyrs and is upheld in current canon law (no.1237). Exceptions are made today for portable altars such as those used in wartime.

Selling relics has always been forbidden. Church law says significant relics can't even be moved around without express permission from the Vatican (no. 1190).

Attributing magical powers to such items is considered an abuse, but the tendency to be superstitious about holy objects is not unknown in the modern church. From the Holy Grail to the Shroud of Turin, the curious and the credulous will always find a less than edifying fascination with such objects. Church teaching draws a distinction between proper and improper veneration. Worship belongs to God alone. Even if a saint should appear suddenly in an apparition, human honor is the limit of our tribute.

Scripture: *The Bible regards holiness as a divine attribute communicable to people, places, and things (e.g. Moses' shining face, the Ark and its sacred utensils, the Temple's Holy of Holies.) The topic of relics, specifically, is not treated. But see 2 Kings 13:20-21; Mark 5:25-34; Acts 5:12-15*



BUT WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?
MT. 16:15

A Stewardship Moment

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekend of August 22/23, 2026

Saint Paul reminds us in today's second reading that the ultimate origin of everything is God. Since everything comes from God, we are God's own. We can never put God in our debt. There is absolutely no negotiating with God. Every breath we take is a gift. Every good deed we perform is grace. Good stewards realize they are created and called to make the beauty, greatness, compassion and justice of God and his gifts known throughout the world. The stewardship question for us is whether we are willing to embrace this call, acknowledge our dependence on God and give our lives over to him completely for this purpose.

RETROUVAILLE

A LIFELINE FOR MARRIED COUPLES
OF JOLIET ILLINOIS



Is your marriage on the **WRONG** track?

Retrouvaille can help you put your marriage back on the **RIGHT** track!

Our next marriage-saving weekend is September 18 – 20, 2026
at the Carmelite Spiritual Center in Darién, IL

All marriages have conflicts, and too often these conflicts drive a wedge between spouses and puts them on the path to disillusionment and misery. Retrouvaille gives couples the tools to resolve conflicts constructively, improve communication, and foster an environment in which love, trust, forgiveness, and commitment flourish. It's no wonder that the Joliet Diocese and Archdiocese of Chicago recommend Retrouvaille – a program that has helped **over 200,000 couples** improve their marriages over the past 40+ years.

Don't be a statistic. Be a success story!

Call us at 815-246-2080, Email us at
JolietRegistration@HelpOurMarriage.org, or



Letters of application are now being accepted for the Theresa Fritz Catholic Education Scholarship for the 2026-2027 school year. Applicants must be a parishioner of St. Margaret Mary and attend a

Catholic grade or high school or a Catholic university. Please submit a letter to Fr. Ron at the Tri-Parish office explaining which school you are attending and your reason(s) for choosing a Catholic school. Letters need to be received in the office by September 4, 2026.

Catholic Snacks, Get Fed

Are priests ever allowed to break the seal of confession?

Are there exceptions to the rule?

No.

Are you surprised at the brevity of the answer?

There's really nothing more to the answer than a direct NO.

The Church takes the seal of the confessional with the utmost seriousness. Anything a priest is told in confession must remain secret. A priest cannot reveal it, no matter the circumstances or the sin. The identity of the penitent—if the priest knows it—must also be kept confidential.

No one—not even public officials, law enforcement, judges, nor a superior—no one can legitimately demand information about a person's confession from a priest. The priest is obliged to keep the seal, even if he is threatened with prison, torture, or death.

Indeed, history tells us of priests who have gone to their deaths rather than break the seal. In the 14th century, the king of Bohemia, suspecting his wife of adultery, tried to force her confessor to reveal her sins. The confessor—St. John Nepomucene—refused to say a word, and was eventually thrown into a river and drowned.

He remains one of the most famous defenders of the confessional, a priest who illustrated most fully just how serious his obligation is.

When a man chooses to become a priest, he knowingly takes on the obligation to die rather than break the seal. Knowing about this obligation can teach us to appreciate a good priest even more than we did before.

Confession is one of the most beautiful gifts of our faith—and one of the most misunderstood!
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Martyrdom of St. John Nepomuk by
Szymon Czechowicz



Caregiver Educational Series

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet invites family caregivers to a **Caregiver Educational Series** at the Kankakee Public Library on Wednesdays in September from 1:30–2:30 p.m. Sessions will feature local experts discussing programs and services for caregivers, dementia communication and behaviors, guardianship and power of attorney, caregiver burnout, and new rules for end-of-life care.

The series will be held at Kankakee Public Library, 201 E. Merchant St., Kankakee.

For more information or to register, call Amanda at 815-523-9919.

Reflection—What Is Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a decision. It is not a feeling.

Forgiveness is showing mercy even when the injury has been deliberate.

Forgiveness is accepting the person as he or she is.

Forgiveness is taking a risk of being hurt again.

Forgiveness is accepting an apology.

Forgiveness is choosing to love one's self and others.

Forgiveness is a way of living.

MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

Monday, August 24, 2026

Monday, September 21, 2026

Monday, October 19, 2026

St. Lawrence Church

135 E. Rice Road in South Wilmington

4-5:30pm (Or until food runs out)

RAIN OR SHINE!

The Northern Illinois Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry delivers healthy food (meat, produce, and nonperishable items) to people in need. **No identification is required. This event is open to anyone in need of food!** Mobile Food Pantries use a "drive thru" method to distribute pre-packed groceries. Please clear space in your trunk or backseat so volunteers can load boxes of food directly into your vehicle.

These Mobile Food Pantries are sponsored by
August – A CCHD Grant (Catholic Campaign for Human Development)
September – The Ahearn Family in Memory of Judy Ahearn
October – GSW HS Youth Philanthropy



Catholic Charities is a faith-based organization providing service to people in need and calling others of good will to do the same.

To the LORD
Be Glory Forever.
AMEN ✚

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August 23, 2026

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 22:19-23 | Rom 11:33-36 | Mt 16:13-20

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

In today's second reading, St. Paul reflects in awe over the "depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God." God's judgments are inscrutable, his ways unsearchable, he goes on to say. While on our own, we cannot know the depth of who God is and the beauty of his plan for us, we have been given access to this knowledge by the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel, Peter is able to grasp that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God," not by "flesh and blood," but by a revelation from our heavenly Father. The Church that is still led by Peter's successor continues to be guided by the Spirit into the fullness of truth. (Jn 16:13) As individual believers, we, too, have received the Spirit in our hearts. By living in communion with our Holy Father and by seeking to listen to the Spirit who also speaks into the depths of our hearts, we can rest assured that we are in a "sure spot" where we can receive all that the Lord wishes to reveal to us about what it means to live in him.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Today's Gospel demonstrates that Christ desired to place Peter – and his successors – as the visible head of his Church. Yes, God willed from the beginning to leave his Church with a leader who could safeguard the quintessential confession of Christ as the "Son of the living God," but there's more to it than this. Peter is given *keys to the kingdom of heaven*. And what are keys for if not to open doors? In a very real way, the mission of our Holy Father is to open up access to God's kingdom, and there are many examples of this. On World Mission Sunday in 2011, Pope Benedict said, "The proclamation of the Gospel is intended for all peoples." And Pope Francis, speaking at World Youth Day in 2023, emphasized that the Gospel is for todos, todos, todos – everyone, everyone, everyone, without exception. As we pray for our Holy Father and the immense task with which he has been entrusted, let us work in our own way to ensure that the doors of our churches, the way to the kingdom of heaven, remain open for all.

PRAY

As we reflect on the gift that Jesus left us by making Peter and his successors the visible head of his Church on earth, take some time to pray for our Holy Father and his intentions. You can pray along with the Pope at the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (a site which contains a short video of the Pope's monthly prayer intention and other prayer resources) at www.popesprayer.va.



Small text on the right side of the image: Saint Peter depicted by Peter Paul Rubens holding the keys of heaven while vested in the papal dress - Museo del Prado, Public domain

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matt 16:18

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church

and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matt 16:13-20; L121A

Jesus went into the region of

Caesarea Philippi and

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."

Then he strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Reflecting on the Gospel

The question Jesus poses in today's gospel is not a pop quiz for the disciples. Since it comes halfway through Matthew's Gospel, at a critical turning point, we might be tempted to think Jesus is giving a kind of midterm exam to see how well the disciples are understanding him and to test whether they have what it takes to go the rest of the journey with him. But the scene may also reflect Jesus's own development in understanding his identity and mission.

In contrast to modern Western cultures in which an individual expends energy trying to find a unique identity as a person distinct from other persons, in Jesus's culture, characterized by dyadic personality, a person understood himself or herself only in relationship to the groups in which she or he was embedded: family, clan, nation, and religion. Paul, for example, identifies himself to be "of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrew parentage, in observance of the law a Pharisee" (Phil 3:5).

In today's gospel, Jesus seeks out others' perceptions as he solidifies his understanding of himself. The disciples first report that people align Jesus with revered prophetic figures: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah. While there are many parallels between Jesus and these prophets, Matthew clearly distinguishes Jesus from them. He is the "mightier" one "coming after" John (Matt 3:11). And it is John who embodies the re-

turned Elijah (see Matt 11:14; 17:12).

As Jesus presses the disciples for their own response, Peter, the spokesperson for the group, rightly declares, "You are the Christ [*christos*]" (Matt 16:16). The Greek *christos* means "Messiah" or "anointed," a term used in the Old Testament for one who is set apart by God for particular service, such as kings (Ps 2:2; 89:20), priests (Lev 4:3, 5), and prophets (1 Kgs 19:16). That Jesus is *christos* is not a new revelation in Matthew's Gospel (see 1:1, 17, 18; 11:2). But the nature of Jesus's messiahship as entailing suffering and death is articulated for the first time in the ensuing verses (16:21-27), the gospel for next Sunday.

As Jesus's identity emerges and solidifies, so too does that of Peter. Verses 17 to 19 are unique to Matthew, with a wordplay on the name *Petros*, "rock," in Greek. Jesus exalts the emerging rocklike faith of Peter and of the whole community of disciples whose identity is tied up in that of Jesus. Yet in the very next verses, the "rock" will falter when confronted with the stumbling block (*scandalon*, 18:6, 7) of Jesus's passion. Nonetheless, as the gospel progresses, Jesus continues to call him "Peter," enabling him to become what he is named. Just as the disciples' naming of Jesus as "Messiah" and partnering with him in his messianic mission enabled him to embrace all that being the "anointed" one entailed, so too Jesus's identification of the believing community as "rock solid" brought forth that quality in them. Likewise, we are invited to let Jesus and our faith community call forth our deepest identity as followers of the anointed, whose solidity is sure.

