

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY OT-A

In today's second reading St. Paul asks three rhetorical questions:

- "Who has known the mind of the Lord?"
- Who has been his counselor?
- And, "Who has given the Lord anything that he might be repaid?"

Of course, the answer to each of these questions is: "No one."

And yet, don't we sometimes:

- Ask God: "Why are you doing this?"
- Or give God advice about how things should happen.
- Or even, think that God owes us something.

The challenge is to remember that we humans see only a small slice of what life shows us, and even this we do not fully comprehend.

God's wisdom, God's ways, are so profound ... how can we ever hope to understand the full meaning of the Divine plan this side of heaven?

And yet, the amazing thing is this: God chooses to involve humanity intimately in the unfolding of that Divine plan ...
... so much so that God takes on flesh in Jesus.

And Jesus continues the Divine pattern by calling ordinary men and women to follow him and to build up the Kingdom of God.

We see this in today's Gospel as Jesus calls Peter the "rock on which I will build my Church."

As you know, the Greek word "petros" means "rock."

I guess you could call me "Rocky" ... but then again, maybe not.

God had chosen Peter ... as full of contradictions and foibles as he was ... to lead the Church.

His confession of faith was to be the reference point for the transmission of the Church's tradition.

In Greek, the word for "church" is "ekklesia" which means "called forth."

It was used to describe the assembly of citizens in ancient Greece.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the people of Israel were called "the assembly of God."

So "Church" designates "the people of God," "the assembly of the faithful," those who, by baptism, are "called forth."

Called forth to do what?

... to proclaim our answer to the question of Jesus: "Who do you say that I am?"

Each of us must answer this question in our own mind and heart.

However, knowing who Jesus cannot be figured out simply on one's own.

Faith is a gift from God.

As Jesus tells Peter: "Flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father."

Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are gifts of the Holy Spirit.

But, faith is not a matter of just "me and Jesus."

Jesus establishes his Church on the rock of Peter's God-given confession of faith and entrusts to him the keys of the Kingdom.

Through Peter and his successors Jesus ensures the continuation of his ministry as teacher, shepherd, and priest.

Our faith depends upon our being enlightened by the Holy Spirit who guides us both personally and through the teaching of the Church.

This Sunday we have an open house for our newly revamped children's Faith Formation program.

We also plan to develop opportunities for adult faith sharing.

Even in the midst of the current health crisis ... especially in the midst of the current health crisis ...

... it is so important that we continue to help our children and each other answer that central question of faith: Who do we say Jesus is? Who do we as Church say Jesus is?