

Twenty-First Sunday of the Year A

Entrance Antiphon: **Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long. Ps85: 1-3**

Christ chose Peter to be the chief shepherd of his flock. Though Peter had strengths he had also weaknesses. We too have weaknesses. When these weaknesses cause us to fall, Christ forgives us and helps us go forward again.



Lord, you strengthen us when we are weak. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, you raise us up when we fall. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, you guide us in time of doubt. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Let us pray:

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 22: 19-23

I place the key of the House of David upon his shoulders.

Thus says the Lord of hosts to Shebna, the master of the palace: I dismiss you from your office, I remove you from your post, and the same day I call on my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah. I invest him with your robe, gird him with your sash, entrust him with your authority; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. I place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; should he open, no one shall close; should he close, no one shall open. I drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will become a throne of glory for his father's house.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalms 137: 1-3.6.8

**Response: Your love, O Lord, is eternal;
discard not the work of your hands.**

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart;
you have heard the words of my mouth.

Before the angels I will bless you.

I will adore before your holy temple. **R/.**

I thank you for your faithfulness and love
which excel all we have ever knew of you.

On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul. **R/.**

The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly
and the haughty he knows from afar.

Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

11: 33-36

How rich are the depths of God - how deep his wisdom and knowledge - and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods! Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him; all is by him and for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**Alleluia, alleluia! You are Peter and on this rock
I will build my Church.
And the gates of the underworld
can never hold out against it. Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

Matthew 16:13-20

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, Lord.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples: 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said: 'Some say that he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said, 'Who do you say I am?'

Then Simon Peter spoke up: 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.' Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us make the profession of our faith:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Offertory:

Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offering:

O Lord, who gained for yourself a people by adoption through the one sacrifice offered once for all, bestow graciously on us, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace in your Church. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Preface:

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
For you laid the foundations of the world
and have arranged the changing of times and seasons;
you formed man in your own image
and set humanity over the whole world in all its wonder,
to rule in your name over all you have made
and for ever praise you in your mighty works,
through Christ our Lord.
And so, with all the Angels, we praise you,
as in joyful celebration we acclaim:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

The mystery of faith. **When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.**

Communion Antiphon:

**The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord;
you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart.**

REFLECTION:

Peter has been called a stumbling saint. He is a great consolation to us because courage fails us all. All of us are mere mortals, who are inconstant in our beliefs. We must learn to forgive ourselves momentary weaknesses and failures. We need to surmount these things; and see the world in less rigid terms. We must not judge ourselves or others by momentary inconsistencies, but rather by commitment given over a long time. Jesus was well aware of Peter's faults, but he saw that, in spite of everything, his heart was sound. Which meant he had the ability to love. And in the long run love is what counts.

Prayer after Communion:

Complete within us, O Lord, we pray, the healing work of your mercy and graciously perfect and sustain us, so that in all things we may please you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Final Blessing:

The Lord be with you

And with your spirit.

May Almighty God bless you:

the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

On the eve of your death, Lord Jesus, you prayed that your disciples might be one as you are in the Father and the Father is in you. Make us feel deep sorrow at the infidelity of our disunity as your followers. Give us honesty to recognise and the courage to reject whatever indifference to each other, mutual distrust or even enmity is hidden within us. Make us find the way that leads to unity in you, through being obedient to the Spirit, in love and in truth.

Prayer: My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will lead, where it will end. Nor do I fully know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road. Therefore, I will trust you always. I will not fear, for you are with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. *Thomas Merton*