

MORNING MEDITATION

The Chair of St. Peter, the Apostle

**We need to be still to listen to God who speaks to us
from the depth of our hearts.**

1 Peter 5:1-4

Peter advised the elders and the presbyters to be good shepherds like Jesus, their master. Real honor lies in serving those entrusted to our pastoral care and “watching over” them as God would have us do.

Psalm 23

**The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Beside restful waters he leads me;
He refreshes my soul.**

Mathew 16:13-19

Jesus changes the name of Simon to Peter. Change of name implies radical change, change of character and life-style...becoming a new person.

Jesus asked Peter, “Who do you say I am?” This is a question of relationship - not information. The question was about who Jesus had become for Peter and the other disciples. It is a question that all of us must continue to answer.

“You are the Messiah.” and “You are the roc.!” are responses of commitment, covenant, and lasting, enduring, eternal relationships. Jesus and Peter defined each other and affirmed each other in lasting relationship.

Jesus affirms that this confession and commitment are not born of reason or logic but of Grace when He says, “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Heavenly Father.”

Peter’s confession is affirmed and proclaimed as a gift of Grace. St. Augustine says, “Even our longing for God is God’s gift.”

Jesus also points out that those of us who confess and commit ourselves to him must learn to live in conflict and tension....that the Father will gift us with the power to live out our commitment. He says, “....the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail...”

Saint of the day, February 22

The Chair of St. Peter, the Apostle and 21 other saints are remembered this day.

In ancient Rome, this day was observed as “Ancestors’ Day”. People remembered the dead, especially their parents. The Christians of Rome began to celebrate this day in memory of Peter, their founding father and their first Bishop and so their true ancestor.

Why is today’s feast called the “chair of St. Peter”? Every Bishop has a chair from which he presides, preaches and teaches officially. In Rome, in the Basilica of St. Peter, an ancient wooden chair is preserved, which is believed to be that of St. Peter. Today’s feast honors this “chair”, this seat, this office...which means, it honors this unity of teaching and preaching authority.....it honors the unity of the universal Church. The chair is the symbol of Peter’s role and that of the popes as pastors of the whole Church. It is therefore a celebration of unity and a celebration of trust in the teaching authority of the Church. Let us pray for harmony and unity in the Church.

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