

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time Homily Matthew

1. Peter is often pictured as the keeper of the gates of heaven
 - a. Why is that
 - b. How is it that Peter is associated with the gates
2. Answer comes in today's Gospel
 - a. Jesus has been going around for a while working wonders
 - b. asks the disciples does anybody recognize the meaning of His work
 - i. Who do people say that I am
 - ii. John Baptist, Elijah or one of prophets
 - iii. Disciples are saying, People see greatness in Jesus
 - iv. Associate this greatness with the heroes of the past
3. Jesus asks the interesting question: Who do you say that I am
 - a. One of the disciples Simon, son of Jonah, says
 - i. You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God
 - ii. Christ means anointed one in Greek, just like Messiah does in Hebrew
 - iii. The Messiah, the Christ is the ultimate hope for Israel
 - iv. Long believed the Messiah was the ultimate leader for Israel
 - v. Messiah would bring Israel to its glorious destiny
 - b. Simon proclaims that Jesus is not just one of the prophets,
 - i. He is greater even than Moses, Elijah or John the Baptist
 - c. Simon goes on to say not only that Jesus is the Messiah
 - i. He is the Son of the living God
 - ii. In Him God is revealing Himself to world
4. Jesus says notes that this is beyond human knowledge
 - a. God has blessed Him with a gift of faith to recognize the reality of Jesus
 - b. When God gives a gift, he gives responsibility with it
 - c. Jesus changes his name to Peter, word which means rock
 - d. You are the rock on which I will build my church and gates of hell will not prevail
 - e. And I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven
5. We all know the value of keys for security
 - a. Not only are there physical keys, but even software keys needed to use a product
 - b. Not a new idea in a larger bureaucracy such as a kingdom access will be limited
 - c. The person with the keys to the palace will be powerful
 - d. If he refuses you entry to the palace, you will not be able to speak to the king
 - e. This would be very important since the king was not just the executive authority
 - f. He was also the lawgiver and the final judge
 - g. Without access to the king, you would be a nobody, no authority, no rights
 - h. Isaiah prophesies God anger with Shebna, the palace official
 - i. The keys to the palace are to be given to Eliakim
 - j. His family will have the authority to allow entry to the king, with the hope that he will use his influence to help the inhabitants of Israel
6. Jesus tells Peter that God is giving him an analogous responsibility
 - a. Peter is to become the rock, the foundation of His Church

- b. He will be given the keys to the kingdom of heaven
- 7. Jesus is preparing the disciples for the day of His Ascension
 - a. The disciples, the world will not see Jesus physically
 - b. We will not hear Jesus speaking to us directly
 - c. Jesus is assuring the disciples, he does not abandon His people
 - d. In fact, He is giving the disciples a responsibility
 - e. Just as Peter spoke for the disciples, he is the focus of their responsibility
 - f. Through the disciples Jesus is founding a Church
 - g. Peter will have the ultimate responsibility of speaking for the Church
 - h. Representing the hope that the Church is to offer
- 8. As the holder of the keys to the kingdom of heaven, a great responsibility is given to the Church
 - a. Though Peter leads and guides us through the Pope, we are all part of the Church
 - b. We are the source of hope for the world
 - c. But we also can be a source of scandal by failing to be faithful to our God
 - d. we can open the doors to the kingdom of heaven with lives of generous love
 - e. we can bind people to the hopelessness of a sinful world alienated from God
- 9. Because of our weakness we are blessed that none of us alone is totally responsible for our neighbors
 - a. We are part of a Church, a community of faith, called to support each other in loving our neighbor
 - b. We have hope that under the guidance of our Pope and our bishops, we will bring other to hope and faith in God
- 10. Peter stands in and represents all of us called to be witnesses of God
 - a. Even though he obviously is not standing on a cloud in front of gates
 - b. he appropriately represents us as offering entry into the gates of heaven