

*The Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Vocation Group invites you and your family to read the story of one person who made a difference. Why not read this story around the family dining table?*



## **Saint Peter : The First Pope**

By parishioner Bob Day

In Scripture, the calling of Simon (Peter) to follow Jesus consists of two stories:

- In Matthew 4:18-20 and Mark 1:16-18, Jesus is walking by the Sea of Galilee and calls to the brothers Simon and Andrew: "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." According to Scripture, they stop what they are doing and immediately follow him.
- John 1:35-42 tells us that Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist. One day Andrew and another disciple are with John when Jesus walks by. John says, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" Andrew responds by following Jesus and spends the day with him. The next day, Andrew finds Simon (Peter) and tells him: "We have found the Messiah." Andrew brings Simon to meet Jesus, who looks at him and says, "You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas" (translated as Peter).

Jesus continued his ministry, gaining followers who learned from him as he taught and preached. When they came to the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples:

"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

And they said, "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 answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood have 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." (Matthew 16:13-19)

The other apostles received the power to bind or loose sins later.

There is more than ample evidence in the Bible which clearly shows that Peter was the first in authority, both given to him and exercised by him, within the Church. Not only was he given the keys to heaven and the power to bind or loose sins:

- Peter often spoke for the apostles (Matthew 19:27, Mark 8:29, Luke 12:41, John 6:69), who were sometimes referred to as "Peter and his companions" (Luke 9:32, Mark 16:7, Acts 2:37),
- He led the meeting that elected Matthias to replace Judas (Acts 1:15-26),
- He preached the first sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40),
- He received the first converts (Acts 2:41),
- He performed the first miracle after Pentecost (Acts 3:6-7),
- He inflicted the first punishment on Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11),
- He excommunicated heretic Simon the Magician (Acts 8:9-25),
- He was the first apostle to raise the dead (Acts 9:36-41),
- And it was revealed to him that Gentiles should be baptized (Acts 10:45-48).

Peter was martyred in Rome, Italy, and according to tradition crucified upside down. Excavations to find his remains had been underway for decades, until just over 10 years ago they were located deep down under the high altar at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Please pray for our Holy Father and all of our Church leaders, and for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

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## **P R A Y F O R V O C A T I O N S**

*Promoting vocations is the responsibility of everyone.*

One person CAN make a difference!



Blessed Mother Teresa