

# Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A Readings & Background on the Gospel Reading

## This Sunday's Readings

**First Reading:** *Isaiah 22:19-23*

God will remove Shebna from his office as master of the palace.

**Responsorial Psalm :** *Psalm 138:1-3,6,8*

God's kindness is forever.

**Second Reading :** *Romans 11:33-36*

Paul sings praise to God.

**Gospel Reading :** *Matthew 16:13-20*

Simon Peter acknowledges Jesus as the Christ and is given the key to the Kingdom of Heaven.

***It is important to read today's Gospel and next week's Gospel as two parts of a single story.***

These readings are a **turning point in Matthew's Gospel.**

This week we hear ***Jesus name Simon Peter as the rock upon which he will build his Church.***

Next week we will hear ***Jesus call this same Simon Peter "Satan" when he reacts negatively to Jesus' prediction about his passion and death.***

In today's Gospel, ***Jesus asks his disciples what people are saying about his identity.*** The disciples indicate that ***most people believe that Jesus is a prophet of Israel.***

Then Jesus asks his disciples ***who they believe that he is.*** Simon Peter answers, **identifying Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.**



Jesus **commends Simon Peter for this profession of faith**, indicating that this insight has come from God. Because of Simon Peter's response, ***Jesus calls him the "rock" upon which Jesus will build the Church.***

This is a word play on the name Peter, which is **the Greek word for "rock."**

***Peter is then given special authority by Jesus, a symbolic key to the Kingdom of Heaven.***

Peter will play an important role in the early Christian community as a spokesperson and a leader.

In today's Gospel, Peter's recognition of Jesus' identity is credited to a revelation by God. This will contrast sharply with Jesus' rebuke of Peter in next week's Gospel. When Peter rejects Jesus' prediction of his passion and death, Peter is said to no longer be thinking as God does but as humans do.



**The use of the term *church* in today's Gospel is one of only three such occurrences in Matthew's Gospel.**

in this Gospel is being credited as the foundation for the Church, a privilege granted to him because of his recognition of Jesus' identity. The Church continues to be grounded in the faith that Jesus Christ is Lord.

***Doctrinal Content:***

<b><i>Profession of Faith</i></b>	<b><i>Sacraments / Liturgy</i></b>	<b><i>Christian Life</i></b>
<p><b><i>Simon Peter holds the first place in the college of the Twelve;</i></b> Jesus entrusted a unique mission to him. His mission will be to keep this faith from every lapse and to strengthen his brothers in it. (#552)                      "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ." This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome. (#85)</p>	<p>Confession of Faith (The Creed)</p> <p>Holy Orders</p>	<p>We are called to be disciples.</p>

# Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

## Family Connection



### Gospel Reading: Matthew 16:13-20

Simon Peter acknowledges Jesus as the Christ and is given the key to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Today's Gospel reminds us that the Church is built on the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. Peter announces the core of ***our faith, that Jesus is God's only Son.***

**The family, as the domestic church, has this same faith as its foundation.**

As you gather together as a family, talk about people whose faith has helped you to be a member of the Church and talk about what you have learned from leaders in our Church today.

Read together today's Gospel, Matthew 16:13-20.

Talk about what you know about Peter and his importance to the early Christian community. Talk about what we can learn from Peter and his profession of faith about Jesus.

Conclude in prayer together by praying today's Psalm or an Act of Faith.

### Prayer for Vocations

**God, in baptism, you called me by name  
and made me a member of your people, the Church.  
Help all your people to know their vocation in life  
and to respond by living a life of holiness.  
For the greater glory and for the service of your people,  
raise up dedicated and generous leaders  
who will serve as sisters, brothers, priests,  
deacons and lay ministers.**

**Send your Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen me  
that I may serve your people  
following the example of Jesus your Son  
in whose name I make this prayer.  
Amen.**



In our prayers for the pope, such as this one below, we can ask our Heavenly Father to help guide our Holy Father Pope Francis to be a worthy Vicar of Christ (His "representative") as he tends to the spiritual needs of over one *billion* Catholics worldwide.

**O God, the Shepherd and Ruler of all Your faithful people, mercifully look upon Your servant [name of Pope], whom You have chosen as the chief Shepherd to preside over Your Church. We beg You to help him edify, both by word and example, those over whom he has charge, that he may reach everlasting life together with the flock entrusted to him. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

This prayer ties in nicely with the Gospels. ***Just as our Lord called St. Peter the rock*** on which He would build His Church (Matt 16:18-19) so too did he instruct him before His ascension into Heaven to "***feed my sheep***" (John 21:17). He chose Peter to be in charge of his flock, his Church. According to scripture and Church history, our Holy Father is indeed the successor to St. Peter! As such, ***the pope must guide the Catholic Church in conformity with what is called the magisterium.*** This is the teaching authority of our faith, as handed down to us from our Lord and His Apostles to the Early Church Fathers, and to other theologians and religious as well over the centuries.