

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

Thus says the Lord God of hosts:
Come, go to this steward, to Shebna,
who is master of the household, and say to him:
“I will thrust you from your office,
and you will be pulled down from your post.
On that day I will call my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah,
and will clothe him with your robe and bind your sash on him.
I will commit your authority to his hand,
and he shall be a father
to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.
I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David;
he shall open, and no one shall shut;
he shall shut, and no one shall open.
I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place,
and he will become a throne of honour to the house of his ancestors.”

Shebna = SHEB-nuh

Eliakim = ih-LIGH-uh-kim

Hilkiah = hil-KIGH-uh

Pause for **THREE** seconds

then look up at the people

and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – A 21

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Pause – and look up at the assembly

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments
and how inscrutable his ways!
“For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counsellor?”
“Or who has given a gift to him,
to receive a gift in return?”
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever. Amen.



Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – A 21

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord

Now when Jesus came into 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,
but others Elijah,
and 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 Christ, the Son of the living God.”
And Jesus answered him,
“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah!
For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you,
but my Father in heaven.

And I tell you, you are Peter,
and on this rock I will build my Church,
and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.
I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,
and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven,
and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
Then Jesus sternly ordered the disciples
not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Isaiah 22:19-23

In this passage Isaiah denounces one Shebna, the prime minister (“who is master of the household,” Is 15), and predicts his replacement by Eliakim. The passage is notable for its use of the “key” taken up in the gospel today, the *Tu es Petrus* saying.

Responsorial Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6, 8

Slightly different selections of verses from this psalm are used on the fifth and seventeenth Sundays of the year in series C. Today’s refrain (“Lord, your love is eternal”) suggests that God’s purposes are not defeated by the infidelity of his human instruments. God can replace a faithless agent with another who is faithful to him.

Reading II: Romans 11:33-36

This magnificent doxology comes at the end of Paul’s discussion of Israel’s place in salvation history. Biblical theology is an attempt to reflect on the ways of God in salvation history. This is precisely what Paul has been doing in Rm 9-11.

But the biblical theologian must always confess the inadequacy of his or her work.

The riches and wisdom of knowledge of God are always too deep to penetrate, God’s judgments and ways are unsearchable. No theologian has ever known the mind of the Lord. No theology, however venerable, can claim to be absolute.

There comes a time when the theologian must lay down the pen and confess the relativity of all his or her formulations. Theology is therefore always subject to change. And theology is best done in the context of liturgy. It must be doxological.

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

Matthew has introduced considerable alterations into his Marcan source. The words “Son of the living God” are added to Peter’s confession. In Mark, Jesus almost ignores Peter’s confession and enjoins the disciple to silence. He then proceeds at once to speak of the necessity of his passion. Peter protests and is met by the rebuke “Get behind me, Satan.”

Matthew has placed the prediction of the passion, Peter’s objection, and Jesus’ rebuke in a separate pericope following the confession. Instead, Jesus pronounces Peter blessed and gives him the name Peter, “Rock.”

Then comes a series of promises: the building of the church on the foundation of Peter; the assurance that the powers of death shall not prevail against that church; the promise of the keys; and the saying of the binding and loosing.

There seems to be a growing consensus that the original situation of these words to Peter was not in the earthly life of Jesus but in a post resurrection setting; that the whole passage, Mt 16:17-19, enshrines very early material going back to the Aramaic-speaking Church; and that the Rock on which the church is to be built is Peter himself, not his faith, as some patristic and most Reformation exegesis has supposed.

But there is division among exegetes along confessional lines over the question of the continuation of Peter's function in the church.

Protestant exegesis sees the fulfillment of the saying about the Rock in the once-and-for-all role that played such a large part in the foundation of the church after the first Easter and resurrection appearances (Cullmann), and sees the power of the keys and of binding and loosing as continued in the church as a whole, though capable of being entrusted to particular officers by the community (Marxsen).

Anglican exegetes tend to agree with the Orthodox that the power of the keys and of binding and loosing is shared by the whole episcopate, though many of them would be prepared to allow the Bishop of Rome a special place in this collegial office. Catholic scholars naturally maintain that the Petrine office is vested in the papacy.

Nonetheless, it is significant that on all sides there is growing Christian awareness that one aspect of the Petrine office—witness to the resurrection—belongs to the events of the Christian beginnings and is therefore inalienable. At the same time, its other aspects—keys, binding and loosing—continue in the church. This continuity is a sign of the faithfulness of God.

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