



ONE MISSION, TWO CHURCHES

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A - 23rd August 2026



Isaiah 22:19-23, Psalm 137:1-3,6,8, Romans 11:33-36
GOSPEL READING: Matthew 16:13-20

Meditation: At an opportune time Jesus tests his disciples with a crucial question: Who do men say that I am and who do you say that I am? He was widely recognized in Israel as a mighty man of God, even being compared with the greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist, Elijah, exclaimed that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. No mortal being could have revealed this to Peter; but only God.



Cyril of Alexandria (376-444 AD) comments on Peter's profession of faith in Jesus:

Peter did not say "you are a Christ" or "a son of God" but "the Christ, the Son of God." For there are many christs [meaning anointed ones] by grace, who have attained the rank of adoption [as sons], but [there is] only one who is by nature the Son of God. Thus, using the definite article, he said, the Christ, the Son of God. And in calling him Son of the living God, Peter indicates that Christ himself is life and that death has no authority over him. And even if the flesh, for a short while, was weak and died, nevertheless it rose again, since the Word, who indwelt it, could not be held under the bonds of death.

Jesus plays on Peter's name which is the same word for "rock" in both Aramaic and Greek. To call someone a "rock" is one of the greatest of compliments. The ancient rabbis had a saying that when God saw Abraham, he exclaimed: "I have discovered a rock to found the world upon". Through Abraham God established a nation for himself. Through faith Peter grasped who Jesus truly was. He was the first apostle to recognize Jesus as the Anointed One (Messiah and Christ) and the only begotten Son of God. The New Testament describes the church as a spiritual house or temple with each member joined together as living stones (see 1 Peter 2:5). Faith in Jesus Christ makes us into rocks or spiritual stones.

Jesus then confers on Peter authority to govern the church that Jesus would build, a church that no powers would overcome because it is founded on the rock which is Christ himself. Epiphanius, a 6th century Scripture scholar who also translated many early church commentaries from Greek into Latin, explains the significance of Jesus handing down the "keys of the kingdom":

For Christ is a rock which is never disturbed or worn away. Therefore Peter gladly received his name from Christ to signify the established and unshaken faith of the church... The devil is the gateway of death who always hastens to stir up against the holy church calamities and temptations and persecutions. But the faith of the apostle, which was founded upon the rock of Christ, abides always unconquered and unshaken. And the very keys of the kingdom of the heavens have been handed down so that one whom he has bound on earth has been bound in heaven, and one whom he has set free on earth he has also set free in heaven. (INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPELS 28)

The Lord Jesus offers us the gift of unshakeable faith, enduring hope, and unquenchable love - and the joyful boldness to proclaim him as the one true Savior who brings us the kingdom of God both now and forever. Who do you say he is to yourself and to your neighbor?

Christ, the Son of the living God, by Epiphanius the Latin (315-403 AD)

Did the Lord not know what people called him? But by questioning he brought forth the conviction of the apostle Peter and left for us in the future a strong affirmation of faith. For the Lord questioned not only Peter but all the apostles when he said, "Who do you say that I am?" Yet one on behalf of all answered the King, who is in due time to judge the whole world. He is God, both God and man. How miserable does this make those who are false teachers and strangers now, and to be judged in eternity. If Christ is the Son of God, by all means he is also God. If he is not God, he is not the Son of God. But since he himself is the Son, and as the Son takes up all things from the Father, let us hold this same one inseparably in our heart because there is no one who escapes his hand. (excerpt from INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPELS 28)

Photo taken by Fr Alex Chow, 24 April 2026, Meteora, Kalabaka, Greece.

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Office (for both Churches): 17 Stevens Road Forest Hill Vic 3133 (St Timothy's)

Parish Office tel: 03 9412 8499; Presbytery tel: 03 9877 2292

St Luke the Evangelist, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South

Email: foresthill@cam.org.au | Email: blackburnsouth@cam.org.au | Web: luktim.church

Parish Priest

Fr Alex Chow

Parish Secretary

Sonya O'Farrell

Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Fridays

10am – 2pm

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SUNDAY MASS**Saturday Vigil:** 5pm (SL)**Sunday:** 8:30am (SL)

10:30am (ST)

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WEEKDAY MASSES**Tues.** 6:30pm (SL)**Wed.** 9:15am (ST)

1st Wed. Mass of

Anointing @ 10am

Thurs. 9:15am (ST)**Fri.** 9:15am (SL*)

6.30pm (ST)

Sat. 9.15am (SL*)

*Rosary after Mass

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RECONCILIATION

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:10pm

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**EXPOSITION OF THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT &
EVENING PRAYER**

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**HOSPITALITY AFTER MASS
AT ST. LUKE'S**Second weekend of each
month - bring a plate to
share (optional)**YOUNG ADULT GROUP -**

To Be Confirmed

LEGION OF MARY -Friday 28th Aug @ 10.15am
at St Luke's Parish Hall
Kitchen. Enquiries to
Lucy 0419 591 423**Next Week's Daily Readings**
24 Aug - 30 Aug Ordinary Time**MONDAY Aug 24** Rev 21:9-14

Ps 144:10-13, 17-18 Jn 1:45-51

St Bartholomew, apostle**TUESDAY Aug 25** 2 Thess 2:1-3, 14-

17 Ps 95:10-13 Mt 23 :23-26

WEDNESDAY Aug 26 2 Thess 3:6-10,

16-18 Ps 127:1-2, 4-5 Mt 23:27-32

THURSDAY Aug 27 1 Cor 1:1-9

Ps 144:2-7 Mt 24:42-51

St Monica**FRIDAY Aug 28** 1 Cor 1:17-25

Ps 32:1-2, 4-5, 10-11 Mt 25:1-13

St Augustine, bishop, doctor**SATURDAY Aug 29** Jer 1:17-19

Ps 70:1-6, 15, 17 Mk 6:17-29

**The Passion of St John the Baptist,
martyr****SUNDAY Aug 30** Jer 20:7-9

Ps 62:2-6, 8-9 Rom 12:1-2

Mt 16:21-27

22nd SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME**MELBOURNE SYNOD 2026***Adsumus Sancte Spiritus***Prayer of invocation to
the Holy Spirit for discernment**

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. Amen



melbournecatholic.org/synod



St Vincent de Paul Society, Blackburn South & Forest Hill conferences
invite new and current members to a Welcome to New Members and
Visitation workshop on Tuesday 1st September from 6.30 to 8.00pm at St
Luke's Parish Hall, 46 Orchard Gve Blackburn South. RSVP to
Saveria.Lavista@svdp-vic.org.au by Fri. 28th August for catering purposes.

MINISTERS OF THE WORDSaturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST**22 and 23 AUG**Steve Kilroe-Smith
Kana Chelliah
Trevis Yee**29 and 30 AUG**Marg Yore
Beryl Chelliah
Ryan Yee**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST**Saturday 5pm SL
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Laura CiganaEdna Lee
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Eleanor Mendes**SLIDE OPERATORS**Saturday 5pm SL
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Paul Tierney
Lee Min YeeChoir
Rosemary Donaldson
Manny Gonzalez**SL WELCOMERS 22 - 23 Aug**5pm John Ryan
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Bernard O'Malley, Joanne Nolan,
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Anico Yee & Wilson D'Souza
Next week Team 6
Barry Silvester & Seng Chan

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All who are sick, especially Seng Chan, Fran Davidson, Filomena Italiano, Derek Koh, Ann Jones, Shirley Prabha, Helen MacKay, Kevin Ryan, Suzy Bookluck, Emilio Moreno Garcia, Agatha Wink, Chris Leach, Dora Leung, Hazel Greal, Josephine Alexander, Kit Bing Fan, Kathryn Holmes, Stewart Davis, Mark, Margaret Hayes, Charmaine Bancroft, Marilene Japour, Paciencia Cabral and all those parishioners unable to be among us this weekend.

All who have died, especially Irene O'Malley who died recently and for all those whose anniversaries occur about this time including Hilde Bayer Ygoa, John Patrick, Philip Benizi Pereira, Melencio Salta, Bill Hurley, Annie McLoney, Gordon Owen, Francisco S. Quimbo, Sheila Bacon, Joseph Gerard Borg, John Patrick, Daniel Justin O'Carroll, Carmel Azzopardi, Donald Roy Beaton, Muriel Teresa Ellis, Patricia Bourke, John Riggs, Cayetano Rarela, Caterina & Tom Bonica, John Arelette, Agnes Ryan & Therese Monica Byrne. May they rest in peace.

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MERDEKA DAY MASS & POTLUCK DINNER: Sun. 30th August 5.30pm Mass at St Luke's Church followed by dinner in the parish hall. More information on the notice boards in both churches or speak to Fr Alex.

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: [Finding our voices](#)

MAJELLAN MEDIA: [Bless Our Animals](#)

STEWARDSHIP CORNER:

The First collection is for the priest and retired priests.

The Second collection is for parish expenses.

Please note that collection totals will no longer be published each week in the newsletter. Presbytery and Church donations will be reported on a monthly basis at all weekend Masses. To donate regularly via envelope, credit card or bank account, please contact the parish office.

Parish Groups & Contacts

Volunteers and Rosters:

*Kelvin & Susan Chen (ST),
Margaret Gearon (SL)*

Baptism Preparation: *Fr Alex*

Parish Collection Preparers

*ST: Barry Silvester &
Michael Kawalewski*

Parish Safeguarding Committee

*Fr Alex, Sonya O'Farrell,
Darren McLean & Janette Clark*

Parish History

SL: Margaret Gearon

Parish Accountant

Bernard Negline

SL & ST: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

*ST: Roster of Parishioners
SL: Greg Grant*

Church Cleaning & Flowers

*SL: Megan McLean
ST: Susan Chen*

Church Linen: *SL: Beryl Chelliah*

Parish Garden Maintenance

*ST: Des Connors
SL: Darren McLean*

Parish Choirs

*ST: Miguel Ilagan
SL: Fr Alex*

Bible Timeline: *Chris Lim*

ALPHA: *Lynda Kilroe-Smith*

Young Adult Ministry:

Sarah Santilli & Jersy Soesanto

RCIA: *David West*

St Vincent de Paul Conference

*For Assistance: 1800 305 330
(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)
ST: John McCoy
SL: Margaret Gearon &
Steve Kilroe-Smith*

Entrance Antiphon: Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me, save the servant who trusts in you, my God.
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

Response to the Psalm: Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.

Gospel Acclamation: You are Peter, the rock on which I will build my Church; the gates of hell will not hold out against it.

Eucharistic Acclamation: We proclaim your death O Lord and profess your resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord; you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY/FAMILY MASS

ST TIMOTHY'S: Sunday 23rd Aug @10.30am Mass

ST LUKE'S: Next Family Mass will be on Sept 12th
and on the second Saturday of each month.



MERDEKA Mass

30th Aug Sunday, 5:30pm

St Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church

46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South 3130

You are warmly invited to join us for an evening mass at 5:30 PM marking Malaysia's Independence Day, followed by a potluck dinner as we come together in faith and celebrate our rich culture. We look forward to this meaningful occasion with you!

Fr Alex Chow (alexander.chow@cam.org.au)
Fr Collin Nunis (collin.nunis@cam.org.au)
Fr Robin Lomangkong (roblowe.vine@gmail.com)
Xavier Ng (yhee.nxg@gmail.com)

Your generous gift
supports ministries
across the Archdiocese
— bringing the Good
News to life not only in
word, but in action.

Thank you.



THE
ARCHBISHOP'S
CAMPAIGN
2026



melbournecatholic.org/archbishopscampaign

The 2026 Archbishop's Campaign is now underway, and we ask everyone to consider a one time or monthly pledge to support the vital ministries of our Archdiocese. Brochures with more information can be found around the churches. Online (direct debit or credit card) donations are the most secure and preferred method of donating and can be made via the QR code. You can also donate via the supplied campaign envelopes or anonymously via cash directly into the collection plate during the campaign weekends. The Giving Weekend is this weekend, 22 & 23 August.

NEW

RCIA is starting soon!

Are you interested in becoming Catholic or know someone who is? Want to learn more about the faith in a friendly, small group environment? We will be meeting at St Luke's on Tuesday nights at 7pm, starting from the **20th of October**. To join us or for more information, get in touch with Fr Alex (alexander.chow@cam.org.au) or the Parish office (blackburnsouth@cam.org.au). Watch this space for more development.

Rite of Christian
Initiation of Adults

NEW

SALT Youth Ministry (Yr 7 - 12)

Date: 27th August 2026 :7:00- 8:30pm
Where: Discovery Centre, St Luke's Primary,
46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South.



Please join us on our second gathering. With our name sorted - SALT Youth - we'll now be embarking on the sacraments of Initiation. The session will include fun games, snacks, and a dive into what the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches about sacraments, and their place in the spiritual life.

ST LUKE'S FETE in partnership with ST TIMOTHY'S - 18th October '26

We have started to promote the fete on our social media. Please like and share our posts to encourage everyone to attend the fete and support our generous sponsors.

<https://www.facebook.com/stlukesfete2026/>

<https://www.instagram.com/stlukesfete/>



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Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A - 23rd August 2026



Isaiah 56:1,6-7, Psalm 66(67):2-8, Romans 11:13-15,29-32

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 15:21-28

The Canaanite woman debates with Jesus and saves her daughter

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, 'Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' But he answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give her what she wants,' they said 'because she is shouting after us.' He said in reply, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.' But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said 'help me.' He replied, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs.' She retorted, 'Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.



Do you ever feel "put-off" or ignored by the Lord?: This passage describes the only occasion in which Jesus ministered outside of Jewish territory. (Tyre and Sidon were fifty miles north of Israel and still exist today in modern Lebanon.) A Gentile woman, a foreigner who was not a member of the Jewish people, puts Jesus on the spot by pleading for his help. At first Jesus seemed to pay no attention to her, and this made his disciples feel embarrassed. Jesus does this to test the woman to awaken faith in her. On a personal level, the encounter between Jesus and the Canaanite woman reflects similar situations especially when our prayers seem to go unanswered. We do well to learn from the perseverance of this Canaanite woman so that we may trust in God's mercy and help lead others into the Kingdom of God.

O Woman, Great is Your Faith! The Canaanite woman stands as one of the greatest examples of persevering faith in the Gospels. Desperate for the healing of her daughter, she repeatedly cries out to Jesus for mercy. First, Jesus answers her with silence. Then the disciples urge him to send her away. Finally, Jesus reminds her that his earthly mission is directed first to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Yet none of these apparent obstacles extinguishes her perseverance and faith. Instead, she falls before Jesus in worship and pleads once more for his help. When Jesus speaks of the children's bread and the household dogs, she responds with remarkable humility and confidence: "Even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from their masters' table." She seeks no privilege or special status, only the overflowing mercy of the Son of David. Having heard of Jesus' mighty works, she believes that he has authority over the powers of darkness. Her unwavering confidence moves Jesus to declare, "O woman, great is your faith!" Her example reminds us that authentic faith perseveres even when God seems silent, trusting that his mercy is greater than every obstacle.

Jesus first tests the woman's faith: What did Jesus mean by the expression "throwing bread to the dogs"? The Jews often spoke of the Gentiles with arrogance and insolence as "unclean dogs" since the Gentiles did not follow God's law and were excluded from God's covenant and favour with the people of Israel. For the Greeks the "dog" was a symbol of dishonour and was used to describe a shameless and audacious woman. There is another reference to "dogs" in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus says to his disciples, "Do not give to dogs what is holy" (Matthew 7:6). Jesus tests this woman's faith to see if she is earnest in receiving holy things from the hand of a holy God. Jesus, no doubt, spoke with a smile rather than with an insult because this woman immediately responds with wit and faith - "even the dogs eat the crumbs".

Seek the Lord Jesus with expectant faith: Jesus praises a Gentile woman for her faith and for her love. She made the misery of her child her own and she was willing to suffer rebuff in order to obtain healing for her loved one. She also had indomitable persistence. Her faith grew in contact with the person of Jesus. She began with a request and she ended on her knees in worshipful prayer to the living God. No one who ever sought Jesus with earnest faith - whether Jew or Gentile - was refused his help. Do you seek the Lord Jesus with expectant faith?

Reflection: Do I persevere in prayer when God seems silent, or do I become discouraged and give up? Is my faith marked by humble trust like that of the Canaanite woman? How can I help make my parish and my own life a place where others encounter the mercy of Christ? Is there someone outside the practice of the faith whom God may be inviting me to pray for or gently lead back to him?

Photo taken by Fr Alex Chow, 20 May 2025, The Banqueting Hall (1390), Skipton Castle, United Kingdom
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Darren McLean & Janette Clark*

Parish History

SL: Margaret Gearon

Parish Accountant

Bernard Negline

SL & ST: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

*ST: Roster of Parishioners
SL: Greg Grant*

Church Cleaning & Flowers

*SL: Megan McLean
ST: Susan Chen*

Church Linen: *SL: Beryl Chelliah*

Parish Garden Maintenance

*ST: Des Connors
SL: Darren McLean*

Parish Choirs

*ST: Miguel Ilagan
SL: Fr Alex*

Bible Timeline: *Chris Lim*

ALPHA: *Lynda Kilroe-Smith*

Young Adult Ministry:

Sarah Santilli & Jersy Soesanto

RCIA: *David West*

St Vincent de Paul Conference

*For Assistance: 1800 305 330
(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)
ST: John McCoy
SL: Margaret Gearon &
Steve Kilroe-Smith*

Entrance Antiphon: Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me, save the servant who trusts in you, my God.
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

Response to the Psalm: Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.

Gospel Acclamation: You are Peter, the rock on which I will build my Church; the gates of hell will not hold out against it.

Eucharistic Acclamation: We proclaim your death O Lord and profess your resurrection until you come again

Communion Antiphon: The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord; you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY/FAMILY MASS

ST TIMOTHY'S: Sunday 23rd Aug @10.30am Mass

ST LUKE'S: Next Family Mass will be on Sept 12th
and on the second Saturday of each month.

Your generous gift
supports ministries
across the Archdiocese
— bringing the Good
News to life not only in
word, but in action.

Thank you.



THE
ARCHBISHOP'S
CAMPAIGN
2026



melbournecatholic.org/archbishopscampaign

The 2026 Archbishop's Campaign is now underway, and we ask everyone to consider a one time or monthly pledge to support the vital ministries of our Archdiocese. Brochures with more information can be found around the churches. Online (direct debit or credit card) donations are the most secure and preferred method of donating and can be made via the QR code. You can also donate via the supplied campaign envelopes or anonymously via cash directly into the collection plate during the campaign weekends. The Giving Weekend is this weekend, 15 & 16 August.

MELBOURNE SYNOD 2026 CONSULTATION SESSION - ONLINE FEEDBACK

Parishioners are invited to give their feedback on the three themes of the Melbourne Synod.
Please use the following QR codes and visit the website for more details on the three themes prior to submitting feedback.

Formation &
Participation



Missionary
Leadership



Young
Discipleship



ST LUKE'S FETE in partnership with ST TIMOTHY'S - 18th October '26

We have started to promote the fete on our social media. Please like and share our posts to encourage everyone to attend the fete and support our generous sponsors.

<https://www.facebook.com/stlukesfete2026/>

<https://www.instagram.com/stlukesfete/>



Who do you say I am?

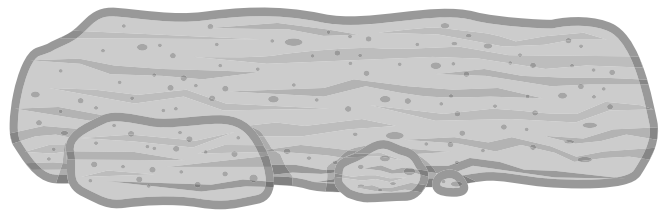


21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Who do you say Jesus is?

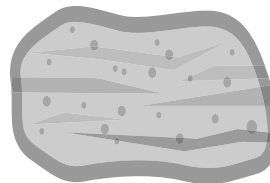
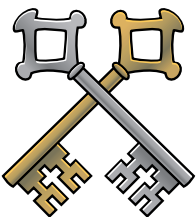
Write some words which describe Jesus.

Jesus said to Peter "You are the rock on which I will build my Church." Draw your church on the rock below.



What makes strong foundations for the church?
Write your answers on the rock.

Match up each of these symbols of St Peter with its correct story



Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say I am?"
Peter replied, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus told Peter that he would be the foundation upon which the church would be built.

When Jesus first met Peter and his brother Andrew he said to them, "Follow me!"
Immediately they stopped what they were doing and followed Jesus.

Jesus told his disciples that they would desert him. Peter told Jesus he would never desert him, but Jesus predicted that Peter would deny him three times.

Jesus said to Peter, "You are Peter; to you I will give the keys to the kingdom of heaven."

21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 23 AUGUST 2026



COLLECT

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful
to unite in a single purpose,
grant your people to love what you command
and to desire what you promise,
that, amid the uncertainties of this world,
our hearts may be fixed on that place
where true gladness is found.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Fishing can be wonderfully relaxing. It gives us an excuse to sit and watch, quiet and still. Being a professional fisherman is another thing altogether. It is hard work, with difficult night hours, challenging weather, and sometimes it is not very productive. Peter was a professional fisherman. He came from a fishing family – his brother Andrew was his partner.

It is quite extraordinary, when you think about it, that Jesus would take these people as his companions and that he would entrust to them the continuation of his ministry after the Easter event. Yet Peter was a solid character. As with his boats and nets, he was a good organiser. He is often the one to speak first on behalf of the other apostles. Jesus regularly takes Peter, James and John aside as his closest collaborators. On Pentecost Day, it is Peter who stands up to speak to the crowd. Yes, he could be impulsive, but his commitment to Christ is unwavering. His leadership lasted for some three decades after Easter until he accepted the martyr's crown.

Look at today's Gospel text to see what Peter was like and what Jesus thought of him.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah**22:19-23**

Thus says the Lord of hosts to Shebna, the master of the palace:

I dismiss you from your office, I
remove you from your post,
and the same day I call on my servant
Eliakim son of Hilkiah.
I invest him with your robe,
gird him with your sash,
entrust him with your authority;
and he shall be a father
to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
and to the House of Judah.
I place the key of the House of David
on his shoulder;
should he open, no one shall close,
should he close, no one shall open.
I drive him like a peg
into a firm place;
he will become a throne of glory
for his father's house.

Responsorial Psalm**Ps 137:1-3, 6, 8**

R. Lord, your love is eternal;
do not forsake the work of your hands.

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
you have heard the words of my mouth.
Before the angels I will bless you,
I will adore before your holy temple. **R.**

I thank you for your faithfulness and love
which excel all we ever knew of you.
On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul. **R.**

The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly
and the haughty he knows from afar.
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands. **R.**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans**11:33-36**

How rich are the depths of God – how deep his wisdom and knowledge – and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods! Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him; all is by him and for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen.

First Reading

We are used to some shuffling in political responsibilities from time to time. New appointments to the portfolios of government will occur after an election, for example. Here in this reading is an obscure example of such a shuffle seven hundred years before Christ in the reign of Hezekiah in Judah.

The master of the household is dismissed and a replacement is installed – with some ceremony! What possible significance can this have for us? Good question.

The link with the gospel is 'the authority of the keys'. To be a holder of the keys is to have power, to be able to open and close. Here a new person is being put in charge.

The reader will need to check the pronunciation of the proper names. For the rest, the sentences are easy enough, though their significance will no doubt remain obscure for the people.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 137/138 offers God praise and thanks. It rejoices that God is faithful to all he has made and loves it. God listens and answers our prayers; God gives us strength.

The cantor/reader will see that the stanzas are made up of regular couplets. Once again, however, care will need to be taken with an unusual two-part response. Hold the intonation at the end of the first line and let it down gently in the second. Coming to rest at the end will cue the assembly's participation.

Second Reading

This text begins with a wondrous exclamation of the sacred mystery of the transcendent God: *how rich... how deep... how impossible to penetrate...* Then three rhetorical questions lead to an emphatic statement of faith in the creator which ends with a doxology of praise.

Normally prepositions are not stressed. The end of this reading would be an exception: 'from him, by him, for him'.

This beautiful and powerful reading needs to be taken slowly and read with a sense of awe and

reverence. The reader should try to move the listeners to worship.

**A reading from the holy Gospel
according to Matthew**

16:13-20

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.' Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Gospel

The papal coat of arms of the Holy See shows two crossed keys, one gold and one silver. They are a symbol of spiritual power (keys of the kingdom of heaven). The Petrine ministry is not about controlling or restricting God's grace, but rather about facilitating access to it. We say the power of the keys is exercised by the Bishop of Rome, successor of Peter, acting collegially with all bishops who are successors of the apostles.

The extent to which this understanding of the 'power of the keys' is embedded in this gospel text is debatable. Following Peter's bold affirmation of Jesus' identity, he is singled out for leadership. But it is the Christian community which receives the Lord's protection against the underworld. This extremely rare use of '*ekklesia/Church*' in the gospels suggests that Matthew is writing of this incident with hindsight.

Within today's community of the baptised, everyone needs to grapple with the question Jesus puts to his disciples: '*but you, who do you say I am?*' The challenge of the gospel calls us to an encounter with Christ; it summons us to believe in him.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Solemn Blessing (Ordinary Time VI)

May God bless you with every heavenly blessing,
make you always holy and pure in his sight,
pour out in abundance upon you the riches of his glory,
and teach you with the words of truth;
may he instruct you in the Gospel of salvation,
and ever endow you with fraternal charity.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son,⁺ and the Holy Spirit,
come down on you and remain with you for ever.

Amen.

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Ordinary Time VI, Roman Missal p. 717)



St Luke the Evangelist Blackburn South

We are Taking Enrolments for All Year Levels

Book in for an Open Morning or a Personal Tour

SCAN TO
BOOK A
TOUR



We are Companions on The Journey

2026

