

Reflection on Matthew 16: 13-19

This is the well-known passage containing Jesus' key question to Peter: Who do you say that I am? With Peter's reply: You are the Messiah.

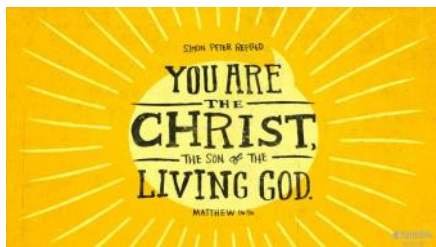
This prompts Jesus's response: You are Peter and on this rock [play on words] I will build my Church.

Identity questions have been almost the staple of our lives for a number of decades, from the kind of liberation movements seen in the 1960s to present day arguments rehashing some of the old ones. Gone, thank goodness, is the time when people knew their place, supported mostly, of course, by those who were placed above you in this scheme, satirized by the famous sketch with the tall John Cleese looking down of his neighbour. We have realised that identity is not fixed, and is partly constructed by our genes, partly by ourselves, partly by our environment (= other people).

We have realised too that with identity comes value; in other words, some identities tend to have more in terms of material goods and power than others. And sometimes identities are in conflict, internally and externally.

One Christian response is to emphasise our common baptismal identity, which is of equal value to God, whatever else we may possess. That's good, but seems a bit passive in response to injustice and discrimination, not just in the world around us, but also in the Church. Jesus' healing and teaching sees him in conflict with the religious authorities when he questions their assumptions—a model for us?

Fr David



Codes for the Zoom worship at 10.30

These are codes for Sundays from 11.04.21 until the end of June. *Different codes next week.*

Meeting ID: 843 1587 4178

Passcode: 180903

Telephone numbers (as previously) 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

NEXT SUNDAY 04.07.2021 St Thomas the Apostle

SERVICES 10.30am by Zoom, 12 noon in Church

READINGS



OT Habakkuk 2: 1-4
NT Ephesians 2: 19-end
GOSPEL John 20: 24-29

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St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 27th June 2021

The Festival of St Peter & St Paul

10.30am by Zoom (phone-in available)

12 noon Mass in Church

We're anticipating by a couple of days the important feast of the two great saints **Peter and Paul**, apostles to the Jews and Gentiles respectively. This is also a time of ordinations to diaconate and priesthood; so we pray with those being ordained and those celebrating anniversaries.

St Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons (c130-c200) also has a feast day this week (28th June). He is much misquoted in the paraphrase: The glory of God is a human being fully alive. A better translation might be: For the glory of God is the living human, and human life is the vision of God.

Please note our Patronal Festival of **St Thomas the Apostle** to be celebrated next Sunday, 4th July. We hope to have some solo voices for the mass at 12 noon.

Fr David



Collect

Almighty God, whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul glorified you in their death as in their life: grant that your Church, inspired by their teaching and example, and made one by your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Acts 12: 1-11

About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (This was during the festival of Unleavened Bread.) When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him. The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, 'Get up quickly.' And the chains fell off his wrists. The angel said to him, 'Fasten your belt and put on your sandals.' He did so. Then he said to him, 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.' Peter went out and followed him; he did not realize that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.'

2 Timothy 4.6-8,17,18

As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing. But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 16: 13-19

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 Messiah, 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.'

Post Communion

Almighty God, who on the day of Pentecost sent your Holy Spirit to the apostles with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame, filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel:

by the power of the same Spirit strengthen us to witness to your truth and to draw everyone to the fire of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

NOTICES

House Group. Tuesday evenings. Please contact Ian Totterdell for Zoom details.

Community Larder The Community Larder will be collecting on **Tuesdays only** from 10am-12noon. The collecting point is in the Choir Vestry via the Tower door. Please continue to be generous.

Knit and Natter Update for June 2021

We shall continue meeting either in person at 10.30am at 19 Maple Road or via Zoom at 11.15am on Thursdays up to 19th July. All details from Jenny on 01392 498715.

200 Club If you would like to join the 200 Club please see Andrew Withers.

Ladies Lunch 24th July at 12.30pm at the Royal Oak. Contact Pat Metford.

Young at Hearts has been cancelled. It is hoped to start again on 25th August.

Ian Totterdell represented St Thomas in the **South West Awake** prayer event last Saturday. Between 10:30 and 11 Christians from different churches prayed for the South West at points along the 630-mile South West Coast Path; Ian was 1 mile south of Kingswear.

On Tuesday 29th look out for walkers on the **Young Christian Climate Network relay** passing through St Thomas.

