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**TWENTY—FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - YEAR A**  
**23rd August, 2020**

**TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**T**oday's readings show how creatively a Scripture passage may be used in different contexts. In the gospel reading (Matt 16:13-20), Jesus challenges the disciples to say who they think he is. Peter replies with an amplified version of what the disciples in the boat said two weeks ago: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (which is also on Peter's lips in John 6:69). Jesus praises him as blessed, and famously declares him the rock on which he will build his Church, and, unique to Matthew, "gives" him the keys to bind and loose. The same binding and loosing, without mention of keys, is later declared of the disciples collectively (Matt 18:18). The post-resurrection commissioning of the apostles in John 22:23 has a similar construction, but in terms of remitting (releasing) or retaining sins. What does this curiosity of the keys mean? Keys lock and unlock, that is, they seal what is closed (be it a door or a chain that binds) so it cannot be opened, or they unseal so the closed can be opened or the bound unbound.

There is much semantic overlapping here. Even if not borrowed directly from a passage in today's first reading (Isa 22:19-23), it is related. It concerns the promotion of Eliakim to replace Shebna as steward during the reign of King Hezekiah, the last good king of Judah before the Babylonian exile; he did what pleased the Lord, and Jerusalem and Judah were preserved from the Assyrians' assault. But Eliakim's promotion is not quite what it seems, for after likening him to a peg set in a firm place there come two verses that are not included in our Lectionary, but they change the tone: Eliakim's family will hang on this firmly set peg, but the peg will give way and all hanging on it will be shattered. Did the evangelist have this in mind? Or does it reflect a negative view of Peter in Matthew's Gospel, perhaps indicated also by its final specific mention of Peter, that is his denial of Jesus during the trial, and his going out to weep bitterly? However, Peter's failure did not bring the whole edifice down, and he does become one of the "pillars" of the primitive Church.

To add to the complexity, Isaiah's key is found in Revelation 3:7, but it is the Risen One who holds it. It is part of the message to the Philadelphians, who have before them an open door that none can close, and if they hold firm the risen One will make them a pillar in the temple of God, never to go out of it. It corresponds to the other references to keys, again found in Revelation: the Risen One has the keys of (the house of) death and the underworld (Rev 1:18), and later an angel is given the key to the bottomless pit in which Satan is bound and locked up (Rev 9:1 and 20:1). So Isaiah's image is applied to both Peter and Christ, and extended to angels. These instances point to a rich and living use of metaphors borrowed from the prophets, but it is hard for us to determine exactly how the New Testament authors understood them even as they redeployed them. Beyond saying that it has something to do with authority to permit or deny, there is no single way of interpreting the original passage or its borrowed use. Use of this passage as a cudgel in disputes about how to understand the primacy the gospels accord to Peter, and in Roman Catholic minds to the papacy, ignores the complexity in Scripture. Even the Catechism is complex in use: no. 242, drawing on sermons of Pope Leo I, says that the faith professed by Peter is the rock of the Church, but in no. 552 Peter himself is the foundation, yet also here it is the faith professed that has primacy, for all depends on who Jesus is.

Rev Dr Barry Craig - *Liturgia* - 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS**

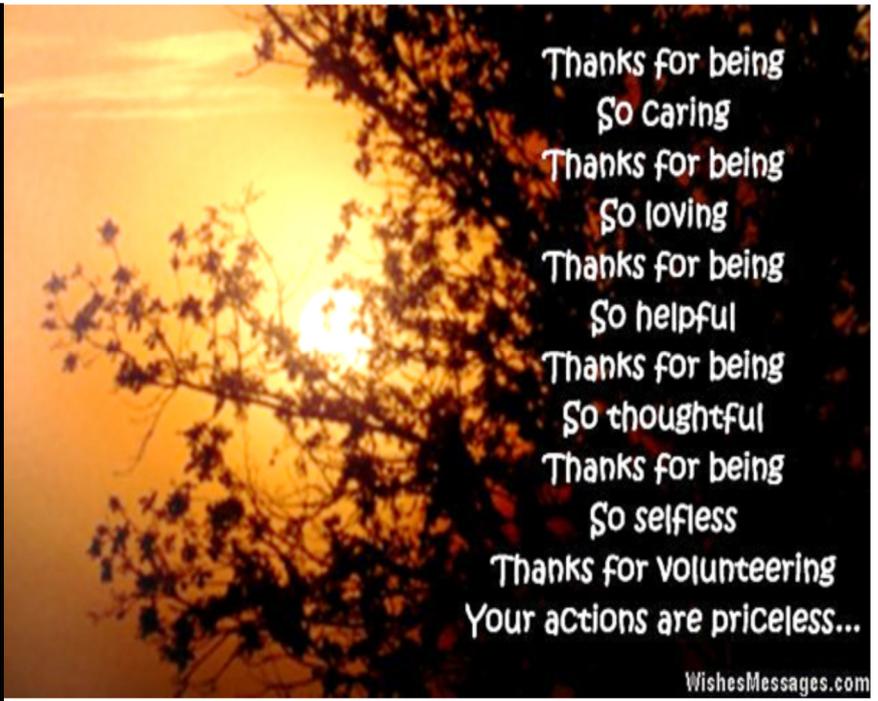
The Parish Office will be **ONLY BE OPENED** on the following days  
**Monday 24th, Wednesday 26th & Friday 28th August**  
from 8.30am till 12.30pm next week. **Thanks**



## Celebrating Senior's Week

This week we celebrate Seniors Week and the valuable contributions that seniors provide to our parishes and communities. It has been especially difficult for our senior volunteers during this time who are always eager to help but can now find themselves restricted from volunteering due to current health protocols. I am conscious that this is especially difficult for parishes as well, which rely heavily on these dedicated volunteers. *From Bishop Howell*

*We appreciate all the support we have been given during this time of COVID from our volunteers here in Petrie Parish we would not have been able to function if it were not for you so*  
**THANK YOU sincerely**



Thanks for being  
 So caring  
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 So helpful  
 Thanks for being  
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 Thanks for being  
 So selfless  
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### Scripture Readings

**TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN  
 ORDINARY TIME - YR A**

**A reading from the book of  
 Jeremiah 20:7-9**

**A reading from the letter of  
 St Paul to the Romans  
 12:1-2.**

**A reading from the holy Gospel  
 according to Matthew 16:21-27.**

### Please remember in your prayers the following people;

Brian Carmichael, Scott Hines, Barry Guest, Rolf Germain, Pita Nepata, Norma Quinn, Marcus Neudecker, Neola Corby, Anne Feeney, Christina Peters, Samantha Pride, Terry Segrave, Rita Miles, Steven Williams, Rohan Somasekaran, Thomas Bird, Bradley Wright, Greg Olsson-Lalor, Nina & Raymond Dove, Tia Huff, Helen Chicken, Dorothy Davidson, John Engwicht, Vera Versace, Michelle Woodworth, Abbie Wellspring, Lloyd Mason, Sharon McCourt, Gina Morieni, Paige Hoffman, Nicole Blackburn, Tim McNickle, Kyle Huff, Nathalie Bernon, Ghishiane Smidt, Patrick Bosworth and Cath Campbell.

*These names will be removed after 2 months. If you wish for them to remain on longer please ring the Parish Office.*



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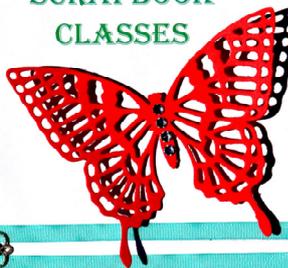
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