

# It's Christ's Church – not ours



## Matthew 16:13-19

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.'



## Reflection

"Remember, it's Christ's Church, not ours. Jesus founded the Church, died for the Church, sent his Spirit to the Church, and will someday return for his Church. As the owner of the Church, he has already established the purposes, and they're not negotiable. Our duty is to understand the purposes Christ has for the Church and to implement them."

*(Rick Warren in 'The Purpose Driven Church' © 1995 Rick Warren)*

In his biography of St Francis of Assisi, St Bonaventure tells the story of Francis entering the little dilapidated chapel of San Damiano. As he prayed before the crucifix, he heard a voice say: "Francis, rebuild my church, which has fallen into disrepair." At first, Francis took this literally, physically restoring the ruined chapel. Later, he came to understand his mission in a more spiritual sense: to recall the Church to the radical simplicity of the Gospel and to the image of Christ in the poor.



## Questions to ponder

- How would you describe the mission of Christ's Church in today's world?



## Reflection

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is discord, union;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,  
grant that we may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to  
eternal life.

*(Known as the 'Prayer of St Francis of Assisi',  
the prayer can be traced back to a magazine called 'La Clochette' published in Paris in 1912.)*



## Concluding prayer

Lord, renew your Church by the light of the Gospel. Strengthen the bond of unity between the faithful and the pastors of your people, together with Francis our Pope, Malcolm our Bishop, and the whole Order of Bishops, that in a world torn by strife your people may shine forth as a prophetic sign of unity and concord. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.



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