

## *Second Tuesday of Lent - 2/19*

"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." (Matthew 16:18)

He did not have a college education. He was not wealthy and he had no particular standing in his community. He was a common human being who struggled through life. He was often envious of his fellow disciples. He stuck his foot in his mouth on more than one occasion and he could betray his closest friend. Yet the foundation of Christianity rests on the shoulder of this simple fisherman named Peter.

Peter is like the amazing skyscrapers found in Los Angeles. These buildings are designed to sway in earthquakes. They are rooted to the earth, but they are not rigid. When an earthquake is experienced in the area, the whole building sways with the earth. There is enough give to allow the buildings to remain intact.

Peter was not a rigid man. He was built to weather the storms that came his way. He did not crumble when Jesus rebuked him and he didn't collapse even after he had betrayed Jesus. Peter was able to accept the new teachings of Jesus, and later in his life he was able to move beyond a narrow understanding of who could be members of this young church so that the gentiles would have the opportunity to be included.

What didn't change for Peter was his deep-seated conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. The moment of revelation in Peter's life, the moment when he understood that Jesus was the Son of God, was the moment when his direction in life became set in stone.

It is important to have such a foundation as Peter if the gates of Hell are not to prevail. Rigid faith might not withstand the mighty hurricanes of hate that seek to destroy. Unmovable attitudes invite the evil forces of this world to tear away the building blocks of hope, stone by stone. And self-righteous and unforgiving attitudes destroy the foundation of love that must move to accommodate the neighbor.

Peter is a good person to get to know during this Lenten season. Watch him! He will amaze with his stupidity at times, and he will disappoint with his cowardliness; but in the end Peter will still be standing. He can be a great companion for those of us who think we are on shaky ground.

### *Reflection Questions*

- 1. In what direction is God calling me?*
- 2. What are my rock-solid convictions?*

*Prayer: Lord, deliver me from rigid attitudes that exclude those whom You would want me to embrace. Amen.*