

Encouraging Deeper Understanding of the Scripture

The first time I stood inside St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, its majesty overwhelmed me. The sheer beauty of Michelangelo's dome seemed to lift my soul right out of my body. Later, I joined the Scavi tour that winds below the basilica, down into the ancient pagan cemetery where Peter was buried. There, in the dim light and narrow passageways, I found myself looking at the bones of a murdered Jewish fisherman, his feet cut off so his crucified body could be taken down more easily.



***"You are Peter
and upon this rock
I will build my Church."***

What a paradox. Above me, the most glorious church ever built. Beneath me, the remains of a backwater fisherman. But this man dared to answer Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?" And crowning that immense dome above his tomb are the words from today's Gospel, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church."

Within you and me is the drama of the lowest and the highest. Every time we confess Christ, humbly, imperfectly, maybe even trembling, we enter that same mystery. The dust of our humanity, touched by the splendor of heaven. God's presence and our dry bones together. Humility and glory. May our lives embrace both

the lowest and the highest, like that great basilica, as we profess Jesus.

— Father John Muir ©LPi

Only Peter Has the Answer

“What do you think of the Pope?”

After the election of Pope Leo XIV in 2025, all my non-Catholic friends texted me this question. The result of the papal conclave was dominating the news cycle, and everyone was curious about this man who would now be so prominent on the world stage, making me temporarily popular with people who apparently need more (and better) Catholics in their lives.



In today's Gospel, we see Jesus entrust Peter and his heirs with the stewardship of the kingdom here on earth, creating an unbroken line of authority that stretches through the millennia all the way to our current Pope — whoever he is at the time you are reading this.

I don't know if you like the Pope. The same goes for your local bishop and your pastor. If a friend texted you, “What do you think of him?” I have no idea how you would respond.

All I know is this: it doesn't really matter. What really matters is what we would say if a friend texted us the same question about Jesus Christ: “What do you think of him, and why?”

In today's Gospel, Jesus doesn't ask his disciples to take an IQ test. He doesn't try to find out which one is the nicest, the hardest worker, the most humble, or even the holiest.

He asks a very simple question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Peter has the answer.

I am not Catholic because I like the Pope. I am not Catholic because the human representatives of the Church have anything to offer me (they often do, but this is beside the point).

I am Catholic because only Peter has the answer.

by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman ©LPi