

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles • Year C • June 29, 2025

*Almighty God,
on this Solemnity of
Saints Peter and Paul,
we thank you for all
shepherds
and leaders of your Church.*

*Bless Pope Francis
as he speaks your
Word to us,
as he shows us how to care
for others' needs,
and as he leads the
Catholic Church
throughout the world.*

*Help us to support
Pope Francis
by our prayers
and by using our talents
to help build up your
Church on earth.*

Amen.

Sunday Word

Acts 12:1-11

Psalms 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18

Matthew 16:13-19

Our Deliverer

Prison cells, double chains, guards on either side, and guards outside the door could not hold Paul captive. Into the most impossible of situations, an angel of God comes to lead Paul to freedom. The angels of God protect us from all that would do us harm and deliver Good News when we are discouraged and hopeless and see no way out of the difficult situations we face.

Our Strength

When we, like Paul, find ourselves in discouraging and difficult situations, it is good to step back and recall the many times and ways that God has stood by us, provided for us, given us strength, and rescued us from harm. Recalling God's faithfulness, we find the strength we need to remain faithful in the race of life until we reach our heavenly home.

Our Lord

In today's Gospel, Jesus first asks the disciples who others say that he is. They reply, "John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets." It is easy for them to recall what others have said. Then Jesus goes one step further and asks, "But who do you say that I am?" How might we answer that question today?

Catholic Doctrine: The Christian Faithful

A Share in Building the Kingdom

In giving Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus entrusts him with the care of the Church on earth. This "power of the keys" has been passed from Peter to each successive pope. But the work of building God's kingdom, the work of proclaiming the Good News to all people, the work of service modeled for and given to us by Christ himself is shared by all of the Christian faithful. This includes the pope, bishops, priests, deacons, those who have chosen to live the consecrated life, and the laity (or lay faithful).

Distinctive Roles

Hierarchy and the Consecrated Life

In the hierarchical structure of the Church, the pope and the bishops, successors of the Apostles, hold the special responsibility and have been given the power to teach, sanctify, and govern the Church in Christ's name. The bishops support and assist the pope, priests support and assist the bishops, and deacons support and assist priests in their ministry.

In addition, some women and men choose to consecrate their lives to the service of God and his Church on earth. They do so by publically professing vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. This choice of vocation is known as the consecrated life. Examples of those who choose this vocation are women religious and brothers in religious orders.

The Laity

Baptized women, men, and children who are not ordained and who do not choose to live their vocations as those in consecrated life are called the laity, or the lay faithful. Each member of the lay faithful, regardless of family status, profession, or situation in life, is called to use his or her gifts and talents to share the Good News, build up the Church on earth, and remain faithful to the ministries of service, prayer, and intercession.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

In 1 Corinthians 12, Saint Paul reminds us that every person is a part of the Body of Christ, with a distinct role to play. The Holy Spirit gives our gifts to us, and our responsibility is to be faithful to our part, to our task, within the Body of Christ. We are also to honor and recognize the importance of each part of the Body, showing concern for all its members and striving to preserve its unity in Christ.

Key Terms

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Also referred to as the "power of the keys," denotes the authority Jesus entrusted to Peter to govern the house of God, the Church on earth (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 553).

CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL

The baptized People of God, called to share in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal ministry as members of the hierarchy, consecrated life, or the laity (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 871).

Voices of Faith

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

—1 Peter 4:8-10

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

—1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

871–873 (Christ's Faithful – Hierarchy, Laity, Consecrated Life)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:

Chapter 11 (The Four Marks of the Church), pages 132–137

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:

177 (the Christian faithful)