

Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles Mass during the Day Lectionary: 591

Reading I - [Acts 12:1-11](#)

In those days, King Herod laid hands upon some members of the Church to harm them. He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also. –It was the feast of Unleavened Bread.– He had him taken into custody and put in prison under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. He intended to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter thus was being kept in prison, but prayer by the Church was fervently being made to God on his behalf.

On the very night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter, secured by double chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while outside the door guards kept watch on the prison. Suddenly the angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and awakened him, saying, “Get up quickly.” The chains fell from his wrists. The angel said to him, “Put on your belt and your sandals.” He did so. Then he said to him, “Put on your cloak and follow me.” So he followed him out, not realizing that what was happening through the angel was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first guard, then the second, and came to the iron gate leading out to the city, which opened for them by itself. They emerged and made their way down an alley, and suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter recovered his senses and said, “Now I know for certain that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people had been expecting.”

Responsorial Psalm [34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9](#) R. The angel of the Lord will rescue those who fear him.

Reading II - [2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18](#)

I, Paul, am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearance.

The Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the proclamation might be completed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat and will bring me safe to his heavenly Kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel - [Matthew 16:13-19](#)

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

We might be inclined to think that our time in history is changing in unique ways with bewildering speed, accompanied by ever increasing and varied forms of immorality, and competing theories on the nature of the human person. The truth is, the human community has been faced with these same challenges for most of our existence, albeit with a constantly accelerating pace. But it is also true that, for the good of all creation, we must slow down and more wisely consider the array of new technologies, new knowledge, new ideas and new thinking – that our rapidly changing societies call on us to express the core of our faith in new ways. Therefore, the evangelizing mission of the Church, as engaged in by her members – the missionary disciples in every age - has to be able to read and understand the signs of their time and respond with the unchanging truth in new and varied ways according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.¹

At the end of the 19th Century the Pilgrim Church marched on and the battles continued to rage. Pope Leo XIII, 256th Vicar of Christ to lead the Church and 1st to consecrate the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, wrote these words, truth to which we all can testify today; *“In these latter times especially, a policy has been followed which has resulted in a sort of wall being raised between the Church and civil society. In the constitution and administration of States the authority of sacred and divine law is utterly disregarded, with a view to the exclusion of religion from having any constant part in public life. This policy almost tends to the removal of the Christian faith from our midst, and, if that were possible, of the banishment of God Himself from the earth. When men's minds are raised to such a height of insolent pride, what wonder is it that the greater part of the human race should have fallen into such disquiet of mind and be buffeted by waves so rough that no one is suffered to be free from anxiety and peril? When religion is once discarded it follows of necessity that the surest foundations of the public welfare must give way, whilst God, to inflict on His enemies the punishment they so richly deserve, has left them the prey of their own evil desires, so that they give themselves up to their passions and finally wear themselves out by excess of liberty.”*²

Our troubles began with our fall from grace, the consequences of which have been compounded among us throughout time in continued in various ways and measures. God never ceased loving us, caring for us, and giving us opportunities to reconcile. God so loved us, he sent his only begotten Son to save us from ourselves and the enemy. The Christ, Son of the Living God not only died for us but poured out his life on the cross giving us the Church. Interestingly, the location Jesus chose for what happens in today’s Gospel reading, Caesarea Philippi, was an area known for its natural beauty and religious significance as the site of a temple dedicated to the Greek god Pan. The area contained a grotto consecrated to Pan's worship and known as ‘the gates of hell’. Herod had built a great temple in honor of the emperor there. Later, Philip embellished it and dedicated it to his imperial protector Tiberius. The location, with its pagan associations and temples honoring the power of man, provides a contrasting backdrop to Jesus's declaration and promise to Peter united with the promise of the Church. By affirming that the "gates of hell" will not prevail against the Church, Jesus is asserting the triumph of divine truth and the power of the Church over all the ways in which man had broken the covenant relationship.

As the Holy Father to God’s children, Pope Leo XIII reminded all of the need for a savior, our hope. He wrote, *“Hence that abundance of evils which have now for a long time settled upon the world, and which pressingly call upon us to seek for help from Him by whose strength alone they can be driven away. Who can He be but Jesus Christ the Only-begotten Son of God? "For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved" Acts iv., 12. We must have recourse to Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We have gone astray and we must return to the right path: darkness has overshadowed our minds, and the gloom must be dispelled by the light of truth: death has seized upon us, and we must lay hold of life. It will at length be possible that our many wounds be healed and all justice spring forth again with the*

¹https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

²https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_25051899_annum-sacrum.html

hope of restored authority; that the splendors of peace be renewed, and swords and arms drop from the hand when all men shall acknowledge the empire of Christ and willingly obey His word, and "Every tongue shall confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" ^{Philippians ii, 11.} ³

The Church is indeed the field hospital of our salvation, built by Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit. She is Mother Zion, the Israel of God, the Mystical Body of Christ, light on the hill calling the world to reconciliation, healing, and new life in the Kingdom of God. The Church, bride of Christ to whom he gave his very self, his heart, in the Eucharist – his sacred heart – the source and summit of our faith. *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* There is one Lord: Jesus Christ. And he raised up two primary pillars of the Church. Today we celebrate them together. Saints Peter and Paul, who represent two very distinct roles of the Church in its mission to the world. The Book of Acts, which is divided between them; the first half about St. Peter and the second half about St. Paul; helps us to see and understand their individual apostolic missions and roles in the life of the early Church. Each in his chosen way gathered into unity the one family of Christ. Both shared a martyr's death and are venerated throughout the world.

St. Paul, with his gift for preaching, brought the Gospel to the nations and helped countless many to know Christ. He represents the prophetic and missionary role. It is that part of the Church which constantly works on the edge, pushing the boundaries of the Church further out, not only in a geographical sense, but also pushing the concerns of the Church into neglected areas of social concern and creatively developing new ways of communicating the Christian message.

St. Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, confessed his faith in Christ. Jesus, recognizing the will of the Father and the action of the Holy Spirit, declares to Peter and the others his unique role and mission upon whom / upon which, the Church is to be built by the Christ. After some great difficulty, deep soul searching, and the forgiving gaze of reconciliation the risen Lord sent him to *'feed my sheep'*, St. Peter went on to fulfill his mission. He represents that part of the Church which gives it stability: its traditions handed down in an unbroken way from the very beginnings, the structures which help to preserve and conserve those traditions, the structure which also gives consistency and unity to the Church, spread as it is through so many races, cultures, traditions, and geographical diversity.

Contrary to the views of some, Christ did not give birth to two Churches, the Pauline and the Petrine. He founded one Church with one Vicar to lead his definitive war against sin and evil for the salvation of the world. St. Peter possessed the divine authority, and St. Paul was obedient. The role and mission of St. Peter is our focus today. About him as first among equals, St. Augustine said: *"Wherever Peter is, there the Church is"*. And in a seminal Vatican II document, it says in paragraph 18, *"Jesus Christ, the eternal Shepherd, established his holy Church, having sent forth the apostles as he himself had been sent by the Father; and he willed that their successors, namely the bishops, should be shepherds in his Church even to the consummation of the world. And in order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, he placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion."* ⁴

"Now, what Christ the Lord, supreme shepherd and watchful guardian of the flock, established in the person of the blessed apostle Peter for the perpetual safety and everlasting good of the Church must, by the will of the same, endure without interruption in the Church which was founded on the rock and which will remain firm until the end of the world. Indeed, 'no one doubts, in fact it is obvious to all ages, that the holy and most blessed Peter, Prince and head of the apostles, the pillar of faith, and the foundation of the Catholic Church, received

³ https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_25051899_annum-sacrum.html

⁴ https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior and the Redeemer of the human race; and even to this time and forever he lives', and governs, 'and exercises judgment in his successors' (cf. Council of Ephesus), the bishops of the holy Roman See, which he established and consecrated with his blood. Therefore, whoever succeeds Peter in this Chair holds Peter's primacy over the whole Church according to the plan of Christ himself [...]. For this reason, 'because of its greater sovereignty', it was always 'necessary for every church, that is, the faithful who are everywhere, to be in agreement' with the same Roman Church [...].⁵

We are not only obligated by also wise to heed the Pope's teachings, support his actions, defend him from his detractors and always pray for his enlightened calling. In fact, it would be unwise to reject the structure of the Church and the authority of the Petrine ministry that Jesus initiated; a grievous sin against the Mystical Body of Christ, the consequence of which is cascading disunity. Following from that consequence is the rejection of the truths proclaimed by the magisterium according to its proper exercise of authority to teach and to govern. God's children then begin to reject the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity – choosing rather to rely on their corrupted natural capacities wherein the most convincing of dissenting leaders seize authority and pridefully do the work of the enemy.

Forty years after Pope Leo VIII, the 257th Pope, reflecting on his own time and the importance of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Christ said;

As We review from the standpoint of eternity the past forty years in their exterior events and interior developments, balancing achievements against deficiencies, We see ever more clearly the sacred significance of that consecration of mankind to Christ the King; We see its inspiring symbolism We see its power to refine and to elevate, to strengthen and to fortify souls. We see, besides, in that consecration a penetrating wisdom which sets itself to restore and to ennoble all human society and to promote its true welfare. It unfolds itself to Us ever more clearly as a message of comfort and a grace from God not only to His Church, but also to a world in all too dire need of help and guidance: to a world which, preoccupied with the worship of the ephemeral, has lost its way and spent its forces in a vain search after earthly ideals. It is a message to men who, in ever increasing numbers, have cut themselves off from faith in Christ and, even more, from the recognition and observance of His law; a message opposed to that philosophy of life for which the doctrine of love and renunciation preached in the Sermon on the Mount and the Divine act of love on the Cross seem to be a stumbling block and foolishness."

From the widening and deepening of devotion to the Divine Heart of the Redeemer, which had its splendid culmination in the consecration of humanity at the end of the last century, and further in the introduction, by Our immediate predecessor of happy memory, of the Feast of Christ the King, there have sprung up benefits beyond description for numberless souls - as the stream of the river which maketh the City of God joyful (Psalm xlv. 5). What age had greater need than ours of these benefits? What age has been, for all its technical and purely civic progress, more tormented than ours by spiritual emptiness and deep-felt interior poverty? May we not, perhaps, apply to it the prophetic words of the Apocalypse: "Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing: and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Apocalypse iii. 17.)

Can there be, Venerable Brethren, a greater or more urgent duty than to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians iii. 8) to the men of our time? Can there be anything nobler than to unfurl the "Ensign of the King" before those who have followed and still follow a false standard, and to win back to the victorious banner of the Cross those who have abandoned it? What heart is not inflamed, is not swept forward to help at the sight of so many brothers and sisters who, misled by error, passion, temptation and prejudice, have strayed away from faith in the true God and have lost contact with the joyful and life-giving message of Christ?

⁵ [Saint Matthew's Gospel](#), The Navarre Bible (Dublin; New York: Four Courts Press; Scepter Publishers, 2005), 120.

Who among "the Soldiers of Christ" - ecclesiastic or layman - does not feel himself incited and spurred on to a greater vigilance, to a more determined resistance, by the sight of the ever-increasing host of Christ's enemies; as he perceives the spokesmen of these tendencies deny or in practice neglect the vivifying truths and the values inherent in belief in God and in Christ; as he perceives them wantonly break the Tables of God's Commandments to substitute other tables and other standards stripped of the ethical content of the Revelation on Sinai, standards in which the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount and of the Cross has no place?

Who could observe without profound grief the tragic harvest of such desertions among those who in days of calm and security were numbered among the followers of Christ, but who - Christians unfortunately more in name than in fact - in the hour that called for endurance, for effort, for suffering, for a stout heart in face of hidden or open persecution, fell victims of cowardice, weakness, uncertainty; who, terror-stricken before the sacrifices entailed by a profession of their Christian Faith, could not steel themselves to drink the bitter chalice awaiting those faithful to Christ?

We witnessed a consoling and memorable display of this Catholic solidarity, greatly intensified in such difficult circumstances - the serried ranks, the assurance, the resolution, the will to win - in those days when, with faltering step but with confidence in God, We took possession of the chair left vacant by the death of Our great predecessor.

We cherish the memory of the many testimonies of filial attachment to the Church and to the Vicar of Christ, and of the ovation so genuine, so enthusiastic, and so spontaneous accorded to Us on the occasion of Our election and coronation; and We gladly take this opportune occasion to address to you, Venerable Brethren, and to all who belong to the flock of the Lord, a word of sincere gratitude for that orderly manifestation of reverent love and of steadfast loyalty to the Papacy, in which one could see recognition of the God-given mission of the High Priest and of the Supreme Pastor.

At the head of the road which leads to the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of the present day stand the nefarious efforts of not a few to dethrone Christ; the abandonment of the law of truth which He proclaimed and of the law of love which is the life breath of His Kingdom.

In the recognition of the royal prerogatives of Christ and in the return of individuals and of society to the law of His truth and of His love lies the only way to salvation.⁶

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Caesarea Philippi:** A historical location with significant pagan associations (temples to Pan, Augustus, Tiberius), chosen by Jesus for his pivotal declaration to Peter. It symbolizes the triumph of Christ's divine truth over human and pagan powers.
- **Christ:** Meaning "anointed one" or "king"; Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ signifies acknowledging Him as the promised Messiah and King.
- **Church:** The community built by Jesus Christ "upon this rock" (Peter), sustained by the Holy Spirit, and entrusted with the mission of salvation; described as the "Mystical Body of Christ," "field hospital," and "Mother Zion."
- **Evangelizing Mission:** The Church's perpetual task of spreading the Gospel message, adapting its communication to the "signs of their time" while upholding unchanging truth.
- **Gates of the Netherworld/Hell:** Refers to the powers of death and evil; Jesus' promise that these "shall not prevail" against the Church signifies its indestructible and enduring nature.
- **Holy Spirit:** The divine guide and revealer of truth, who fueled Peter's confession, guided the Church in forming Scripture, and continues to lead believers.

⁶https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20101939_summi-pontificatus.html

- **Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven:** Symbol of authority given to Peter by Jesus, signifying the power to govern the Church, including the power to "bind and loose."
- **King/Kingship of Christ:** The sovereign rule of Jesus over all creation and the lives of believers, demanding surrender and obedience; contrasted with flawed human kings.
- **Living God:** A specific Jewish term emphasizing God's active, real, and powerful nature, differentiating Him from dead, inanimate pagan idols and deified human rulers.
- **Mystical Body of Christ:** A theological concept describing the Church as the spiritual body of which Christ is the head and believers are the members, united to Him.
- **Petrine Ministry:** The unique role and authority conferred upon St. Peter by Jesus, which continues through his successors, the bishops of the Church, particularly the Pope, providing stability, unity, and a foundation of faith.
- **Rock (Petros/Cephas):** The foundation upon which Jesus declared He would build His Church, referring directly to Simon Peter and his divinely revealed faith.
- **Sacred Heart of Jesus:** A devotion emphasized by Popes Leo XIII and Pius XII, representing Christ's immense love for humanity and serving as a source of hope and guidance.
- **Scripture (Bible):** The inspired Word of God, which the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit and through its authoritative leaders, compiled and interprets.
- **Son of the Living God:** A profound theological declaration by Peter, affirming Jesus' divine nature and unique relationship with God, distinguishing Him from false gods and human claims to divinity.
- **Source and Summit of our Faith:** A description of the Eucharist, signifying its central and highest importance in Catholic belief and practice, as it embodies the heart of Christ.
- **St. Augustine:** An influential early Church Father who famously stated, "Wherever Peter is, there the Church is," highlighting Peter's essential role in the Church's identity and unity.
- **St. Paul:** An Apostle with a specific mission to unpack the meaning of Christ's message, particularly for Gentiles, representing the prophetic and missionary aspect of the Church.
- **St. Peter:** The Apostle upon whom Jesus declared He would build His Church, granted the keys to the kingdom and the power to bind and loose, representing the stability, tradition, and unity of the Church.
- **Unity:** A central prayer of Jesus and a core aim of the Church, often challenged by dissent and rejection of authority, but ultimately safeguarded by Christ's promise.
- **Vicar of Christ:** A title for the Pope (e.g., Pope Leo XIII), indicating his role as Christ's representative on Earth, leading the Church.

Point Summaries: The Enduring Truth of Christ and the Church

This briefing synthesizes key themes from the provided homily and encyclical excerpts, focusing on the centrality of Christ, the foundational role of the Church, and the challenges to faith in the modern world.

I. The Centrality of Christ: "Who Do You Say That I Am?"

The fundamental question posed by Jesus, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew), is identified as the **"fundamental question that every single person really has to face in one way or another at some point in their life."** This question is not merely theological but deeply personal and unavoidable, even for "the hardest atheist."

- **Christ as King and Messiah:** Peter's inspired declaration, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," is highlighted as central to the Church's understanding. "Christ" is explicitly defined as "the king," "the Messiah of God." This understanding implies "surrender and obedience" on the part of believers, as "kings are in charge, queens, and all the people owe their filty to them. They do what the king says."
- **"Son of the Living God" vs. Dead Gods:** The phrase "Son of the living God" is given significant emphasis, particularly in contrast to the "so-called gods" or dead rulers worshipped in the ancient world, such as

Augustus, "the son of Caesar whom he had convinced the Senate to proclaim divine." The homily specifically notes the location of this declaration at Caesarea Philippi, near a temple built by Herod to Augustus and a grotto known as "the gates of hell," underscoring the triumph of the living God over pagan deities and human power. The encyclical reinforces this, stating that Jesus's declaration "is asserting the triumph of divine truth and the power of the Church over all the ways in which man had broken the covenant relationship."

- **Source of Truth and Salvation:** Christ is presented as the singular source of truth about God and humanity. "To say that Christ is that Jesus is the Christ, my king, my savior, Messiah, son of the living God is to say from this man I am taught who God is and who I am. And there is no other person from whom I can learn that perfectly." He is "the only one through whom I can be eternally united with God" and "the only one through whom I can have the abundant life that I can become the one I was created to be holy sacred a saint." Pope Leo XIII further emphasizes this, stating, "Who can He be but Jesus Christ the Only-begotten Son of God? 'For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved' Acts iv., 12. We must have recourse to Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life."

II. The Indispensable Role of the Church and Petrine Authority

The sources strongly assert the divinely instituted nature of the Church and the unique, foundational role of Peter and his successors.

- **Christ Built the Church on Peter:** Jesus explicitly states, "you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This establishes Peter's authority to "govern, to unite," acting "for the king Christ."
- **The Church as the Source of Scripture:** The homily argues that without the Church, "guided by the Holy Spirit," the Bible as we know it would not exist. It questions how the canon of scripture could be determined without the "special charism that was given to Peter and those those who participate in the Petrine ministry."
- **Peter's Role: Stability and Unity:** Peter "represents that part of the Church which gives it stability: its traditions handed down in an unbroken way from the very beginnings, the structures which help to preserve and conserve those traditions, the structure which also gives consistency and unity to the Church." The Second Vatican Council document *Lumen Gentium*, quoted in the encyclical, states that Jesus "placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion."
- **Paul's Role: Prophetic and Missionary:** St. Paul is presented as representing the "prophetic and missionary role" of the Church, "pushing the boundaries of the Church further out, not only in a geographical sense, but also pushing the concerns of the Church into neglected areas of social concern and creatively developing new ways of communicating the Christian message." However, his mission is understood within the unity of the one Church, as "Christ did not give birth to two Churches, the Pauline and the Petrine. He founded one Church with one Vicar to lead his definitive war against sin and evil for the salvation of the world. St. Peter possessed the divine authority, and St. Paul was obedient."
- **Consequences of Rejecting Petrine Authority:** Rejecting the "structure of the Church and the authority of the Petrine ministry" is deemed "a grievous sin against the Mystical Body of Christ, the consequence of which is cascading disunity." This disunity leads to the rejection of theological virtues and reliance on "corrupted natural capacities," where "dissenting leaders seize authority and pridefully do the work of the enemy." This is contrasted with historical figures like Luther, Calvin, and Knox, who "said, 'Yeah, no, we're going to do our own thing.'"

III. Challenges to Faith and the Call to Trust and Unity

Both sources acknowledge the historical and ongoing challenges to faith, emphasizing the need for trust in God and the Church, and striving for unity.

- **Historical and Contemporary Immorality:** The encyclical notes that while contemporary challenges seem unique, "the human community has been faced with these same challenges for most of our existence, albeit with a constantly accelerating pace." Pope Leo XIII describes a "wall being raised between the Church and

civil society," with "the authority of sacred and divine law is utterly disregarded," leading to "disquiet of mind and be buffeted by waves so rough."

- **The Enemy's Tactics: Distrust and Pride:** The homily attributes disunity and moral decline to the "insidious" work of the enemy, who "started in the garden very simply and he's still doing the same game." This game involves inviting people "to be puffed up about ourselves" and "not to trust God." The core choice remains "choose life or choose death," which translates to trusting God or falling for lies that lead "Nowhere good."
- **Trusting the Church's Teachings:** Trusting God implies trusting "what comes from the church," though not "blindly." Believers are also given "the ability to understand" and the "Holy Spirit to guide us and to lead us into all truth." However, the encyclical warns against "reject[ing] the truths proclaimed by the magisterium."
- **The Promise of Victory:** Despite internal struggles and external pressures, the promise that "the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it" remains central. "As bad as it seems, as bad as...the church is not always wonderful, popes can be bad, bishops can be bad, priests can be bad, but even that is not enough to destroy what Christ built. The gates of hell will not prevail. God will be victorious."
- **Call to Action:** Believers are called to "live it fully, completely, humbly, obediently" if Christ is truly their King. This involves personal responsibility to "read scripture," "be familiar with various church documents," and "come to the heart of Christ with a depth of faith." The ultimate goal is "unity" as prayed for by Jesus and "ordained for" Peter, becoming a "Eucharistic people going out doing what Peter and Paul did, teaching the faith, striving for unity according to God's will." The encyclical by Pope Pius XII emphasizes the duty to "preach the unsearchable riches of Christ" and "win back to the victorious banner of the Cross those who have abandoned it." The path to salvation lies "in the recognition of the royal prerogatives of Christ and in the return of individuals and of society to the law of His truth and of His love."