

The Papacy of Peter and Keys of the Kingdom

JESUS CHOSE ST. PETER as the rock upon which He would establish His Church. Jesus promised Peter and his successors, supreme power over the entire Catholic Church.

John 1:42, "Thou art Simon, the son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas (Peter.)"

Matt. 16:13-19:

"Now Jesus having come into the district of Caesarea Philippi, began to ask His disciples saying, 'Who do men say the Son of Man is?' But they said, 'Some say, John the Baptist; and others, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Then Jesus answered and said, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but My Father in heaven. And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And **I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven**; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"

Whereas all the apostles of Christ were given certain powers by the Holy Spirit, nowhere in scripture or otherwise has any apostle or bishop, East or West, ever claim to have possession of the "KEYS" Jesus gave to Peter. In fact, what we do read is how ALL the other apostles and successors to Peter recognized the supremacy and authority of Peter symbolize in the "KEYS".

Luke 22:31-32; "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, strengthen "THY" brethren"

John 21:15-17 "Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs... Feed My lambs... Feed My sheep'" Feeding meant teaching them all Jesus taught.

Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:15; Acts 2:14; Peter named in numerous scriptures that is was St. Peter who was first and last to address to the other apostles.

Jesus singled Peter because Jesus gave him the KEYS of authority over the entire Church that Jesus established. Jesus spoke directly to Peter about Peter's responsibility to strengthen his brethren by teaching them (brethren) all the things Jesus commanded.

EARLY CHURCH FATHERS abided Jesus' choice of Peter:

When we investigate the early centuries of the Christian era, we find how St. Peter's successors in Rome exercised the power of "the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" "to bind and to lose."

Successors of St. Peter in the See of Rome down through the centuries are so explicit and numerous that it would be superfluous to give more these testimonies:

Pope St. Clement (96 AD) to the Corinthians, while St. John the Apostle and Evangelists was still alive, warned against disobedience to St Peter. Clement, had the right and authority as the new Vicar of Christ, to command the entire Church as successor of St. Peter.

Pope St. Victor I (189-198) commanded the bishops of Asia to celebrate Easter on the same day as the Church of Rome, threatening them with excommunication if they refused obedience.

Pope St. Callistus (217-222) declared to Montanism (heresy of Asia Minor) that, because he was successor to St. Peter, he had the right and power to forgive even the greatest sins.

Pope St. Stephen I (254-257) commanded the Asiatic and African Churches under pain of excommunication not to re-baptize heretics.

Pope St. Julius I (337-352) taught that difficulties arising among the bishops were to be decided by himself as the Supreme Judge of the Church.

Pope St. Siricius (384-399) taught that the Universal Church had been committed to his care as to the one who had inherited the Primacy from St. Peter.

Successors of St. Peter who exercised the Primacy of Jurisdiction over the universal Church along with the ecumenical Councils also confirms their authority.

St. Ignatius the Martyr (died 110), writing to the Romans, said that the Church of Rome is the head of all the other churches.

St. Irenaeus (150 AD) a Greek bishop said that it is necessary that every church agree with the Church of Rome because of its higher authority.

St. Cyprian, (250 AD) North African bishop called the Church of Rome the "principal Church and the source of unity."

Philip, the Legate of the Pope (431) at the Council of Ephesus made the statement, to which the Fathers of the Council **unanimously agreed**:

"No one doubts, indeed it was known to all ages, that the holy and most blessed Peter, Prince and Head of the Apostles, the pillar of faith and the foundation stone of the Church, received from Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the human race, the Keys of the Kingdom, and to him was given the power of binding and loosing. Peter lives and exercises judgment even to this day and forever in his successors... His successor and representative in that office, Pope Celestine, has sent us to this synod."

The Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon (451), writing to Pope St. Leo, stated that in the Council he presided through his legate as the head over the members; they speak to him as sons to their father; as to the successor of Peter and the interpreter of the Faith; as to the one to whom the care of the whole Church has been entrusted; and they beg him to honor and affirm their decrees by his decision.

The Third Council of Constantinople (680) addressed the Pope as The Archbishop of the Universal Church.

The Second Council of Nice (787) addressed the Pope as the one whose See is preeminent because it possesses the Primacy of the whole world.

Pope Pius IX between 1869 and 1870; the **First Vatican Council** is the latest and best reference to the Papacy, to its Primacy of Jurisdiction and to Papal Infallibility. This council was a summary of all the past teachings of the Church on Papal Infallibility.

"For the fathers of the Fourth Council of Constantinople, following closely in the footsteps of their predecessors, made this solemn profession: "The first condition of salvation is to keep the norm of the true faith. For it is impossible that the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ who said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church" (Matt. 16:18),

should not be verified. And their truth has been proved by the course of history, for in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been kept unsullied, and its teaching kept holy.”

Luke 22:32 “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren”. They fully realized that the See of St. Peter always remains untainted by any error, according to the divine promise of Our Lord and Savior made to the prince of His disciples.

“Now this charism of truth of never-failing faith was conferred upon St. Peter and his successors in this Chair, in order that they might perform their supreme office for the salvation of all.”

Ludwig Ott, STD; Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma; published 1952

“The possessors of infallibility are:

A) The Pope: The Pope is infallible when he speaks ex cathedra.

B) The totality of the bishops is infallible, when they, either assembled in general council or scattered over the earth, propose a teaching **on faith or morals** as one to be held by all the faithful. The bishops exercise their infallible teaching power in an ordinary manner when they, in their dioceses, **in moral unity with the Pope**, unanimously promulgate the same teachings **on faith and morals**.

Irenaeus of Lyons Adversus Haereses Book III Ch 3.2 [120-180 A.D.]

"But since it would be too long to enumerate in such a volume as this the succession of all the churches, we shall confound all those who, in whatever manner, whether through self-satisfaction or vainglory, or through blindness and wicked opinion, assemble other than where it is proper, by pointing out here the successions of the bishops of the greatest and most ancient church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, that church which has the tradition and the faith which comes down to us after having been announced to men by the apostles. With that church, because of its superior origin, all the churches must agree, that is, all the faithful in the whole world, and it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition"

Irenaeus of Lyons Adversus Haereses book 3 ch 3.3 [120-180 A.D.]

The Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority -- that is, the faithful everywhere -- inasmuch as the Apostolic Tradition has been preserved continuously by those who are everywhere. The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric....

To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telephorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Sorer having

succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate. In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us.

Jerome Against Jovinianus book 1 par 26 (347-420 A.D.)

But you say,[1] the Church was rounded upon Peter: although[2] elsewhere the same is attributed to all the Apostles, and they all receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the strength of the Church depends upon them all alike, yet one among the twelve is chosen so that when a head has been appointed, there may be no occasion for schism.

The disciple of Patriarch Sophronius,

"And for this cause, sometimes we ask for water to our head and to our eyes a fountain of tears, sometimes the wings of a dove, according to holy Hugh, that we might fly away and announce these things to the Chair (the Chair of Peter at Rome) which rules and presides over all, I mean to yours, the head and highest, for the healing of the whole wound. For this it has been accustomed to do from old and from the beginning with power by its canonical or apostolic authority, because the truly great Peter, head of the Apostles, was clearly thought worthy not only to be trusted with the keys of heaven, alone apart from the rest, to open it worthily to believers, or to close it justly to those who disbelieve the Gospel of grace, but because he was also commissioned to feed the sheep of the whole Catholic Church; for 'Peter,' saith He, 'lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep.' And again, because he had in a manner peculiar and special, a faith in the Lord stronger than all and unchangeable, to be converted and to confirm his fellows and spiritual brethren when tossed about, as having been adorned by God Himself incarnate for us with power and sacerdotal authorityAnd Sophronius of blessed memory, who was Patriarch of the holy city of Christ our God, and under whom I was bishop, conferring not with flesh and blood, but caring only for the things of Christ with respect to your Holiness, hastened to send my nothingness without delay about this matter alone to this Apostolic see, where are the foundations of holy doctrine." (Sophronius, to Pope Martin I at the Lateran Council, 893)

St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople (387 A.D.)

"For this is the one great privilege of our city, Antioch, that it received the leader of the Apostles (Peter) as its teacher in the beginning. For it was right that she who was first adorned with the name of Christians, before the whole world, should receive the first of the apostles as her pastor. But though we received him as teacher, we did not retain him to the end, but gave him up to royal Rome." (Chrysostom, On the Inscription of the Acts, II. Taken from Documents Illustrating Papal Authority (London: SPCK, 1952), E. Giles, Ed., p. 168. Cf. Chapman, Studies on the Early Papacy, p. 96).

"And why, then, passing by the others, does He converse with Peter on these things? (John 21:15). He was the chosen one of the Apostles, and the mouth of the disciples, and the leader of the choir. On this account, Paul also went up on a time to see him rather than the others (Galatians 1:18). And withal, to show him that he must thenceforward have confidence, as the denial was done away with, He puts into his

hands the presidency over the brethren. And He brings not forward the denial, nor reproaches him with what had past, but says, 'If you love me, preside over the brethren, ...and the third time He gives him the same injunction, showing what a price He sets the presidency over His own sheep. And if one should say, 'How then did James receive the throne of Jerusalem?' this I would answer that He appointed this man (Peter) teacher, not of that throne, but of the whole world." (Chrysostom, In Joan. Hom. 1xxxviii. n. 1, tom. viii)

Pope Damasus I (382 A.D.)

"Likewise it is decreed: . . . [W]e have considered that it ought to be announced that . . . the holy Roman Church has been placed at the forefront not by the conciliar decisions of other churches, but has received the primacy by the evangelic voice of our Lord and Savior, who says: 'You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it; and I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you shall have bound on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall have loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven' [Matt. 16:18–19]. The first see [today], therefore, is that of Peter the apostle, that of the Roman Church, which has neither stain nor blemish nor anything like it" (Decree of Damasus 3)

Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.)

"Philip the presbyter and legate of the Apostolic See said: 'There is no doubt, and in fact it has been known in all ages, that the holy and most blessed Peter, prince and head of the apostles, pillar of the faith, and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the human race, and that to him was given the power of loosing and binding sins: who down even to today and forever both lives and judges in his successors. The holy and most blessed Pope Celestine, according to due order, is his successor and holds his place, and us he sent to supply his place in this holy synod'" (Acts of the Council, session 3 [A.D. 431])

Pope Leo I (445 A.D.)

"As for the resolution of the bishops which is contrary to the Nicene decree, in union with your faithful piety, I declare it to be invalid and annul it by the authority of the holy apostle Peter" (Letters 110 [A.D. 445]).

"Whereupon the blessed Peter, as inspired by God, and about to benefit all nations by his confession, said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Not undeservedly, therefore, was he pronounced blessed by the Lord, and derived from the original Rock that solidity which belonged both to his virtue and to his name [Peter]"

Peter Chrysologus (449 A.D.)

"We exhort you in every respect, honorable brother, to heed obediently what has been written by the most blessed pope of the city of Rome, for blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own see, provides the truth of faith to those who seek it. For we, by reason of our pursuit of peace and faith, cannot try cases on the faith without the consent of the bishop of Rome" (Letters 25:2 [A.D. 449]).

Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople (449 A.D.): ...writing to Pope Leo

"When I began to appeal to the throne of the Apostolic See of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and to the whole sacred synod, which is obedient to Your Holiness, at once a crowd of soldiers surrounded me and barred my way when I wished to take refuge at the holy altar. ...Therefore, I beseech Your Holiness not to permit these things to be treated with indifference ...but to rise up first on behalf of the cause of our orthodox Faith, now destroyed by unlawful acts. ...Further to issue an authoritative instruction ...so that a like faith may everywhere be preached by the assembly of an united synod of fathers, both Eastern and Western. Thus the laws of the fathers may prevail and all that has been done amiss be rendered null and void. Bring healing to this ghastly wound. (Patriarch Flavian of Constantinople to Pope Leo, 449).

Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.)

"After the reading of the foregoing epistle [The Tome of Leo], the most reverend bishops cried out: 'This is the faith of the fathers! This is the faith of the apostles! So we all believe! Thus the orthodox believe! Anathema to him who does not thus believe! Peter has spoken thus through Leo! . . . This is the true faith! Those of us who are orthodox thus believe! This is the faith of the Fathers!'" (Acts of the Council, session 2 [A.D. 451]).

The Emperor Justinian (520-533 A.D.)

Writing to the Pope, ... "Yielding honor to the Apostolic See and to Your Holiness, and honoring your Holiness, as one ought to honor a father, we have hastened to subject all the priests of the whole Eastern district, and to unite them to the See of your Holiness, for we do not allow of any point, however manifest and indisputable it be, which relates to the state of the Churches, not being brought to the cognizance of your Holiness, since you are the Head of all the holy Churches." (Justinian Epist. ad. Pap. Joan. ii. Cod. Justin. lib. I. tit. 1).

"Let your Apostleship show that you have worthily succeeded to the Apostle Peter, since the Lord will work through you, as Supreme Pastor, the salvation of all." (Coll. Avell. Ep. 196, July 9th, 520, Justinian to Pope Hormisdas).

Sergius, Metropolitan of Cyprus (649 A.D.)

He writes to Pope Theodore,

"O Holy Head, Christ our God hath destined thy Apostolic See to be an immovable foundation and a pillar of the Faith. For thou art, as the Divine Word truly saith, Peter, and on thee as a foundation-stone have the pillars of the Church been fixed." (Sergius Ep. ad Theod. lecta in Sess. ii. Concil. Lat. anno 649)

St. Maximus the Confessor (650 A.D.)

A celebrated theologian and a native of Constantinople, ...

"The extremities of the earth, and everyone in every part of it who purely and rightly confess the Lord, look directly towards the Most Holy Roman Church and her confession and faith, as to a sun of un failing light awaiting from her the brilliant radiance of the sacred dogmas of our Fathers, according to that which the inspired and holy Councils have stainlessly and piously decreed. For, from the descent of the Incarnate Word amongst us, all the churches in every part of the world have held the greatest Church alone to be their base and foundation, seeing that, according to the promise of Christ Our Savior, the gates of hell will never prevail against her, that she has the keys of the

orthodox confession and right faith in Him, that she opens the true and exclusive religion to such men as approach with piety, and she shuts up and locks every heretical mouth which speaks against the Most High." (Maximus, *Opuscula theologica et polemica*, Migne, *Patr. Graec.* vol. 90)

"How much more in the case of the clergy and Church of the Romans, which from old until now presides over all the churches which are under the sun? Having surely received this canonically, as well as from councils and the apostles, as from the princes of the latter (Peter & Paul), and being numbered in their company, she is subject to no writings or issues in synodical documents, on account of the eminence of her pontificateeven as in all these things all are equally subject to her (the Church of Rome) according to sacerdotal law. And so when, without fear, but with all holy and becoming confidence, those ministers (the Popes) are of the truly firm and immovable rock, that is of the most great and Apostolic Church of Rome." (Maximus, in J.B. Mansi, ed. *Amplissima Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 10)

"If the Roman See recognizes Pyrrhus to be not only a reprobate but a heretic, it is certainly plain that everyone who anathematizes those who have rejected Pyrrhus also anathematizes the See of Rome, that is, he anathematizes the Catholic Church. I need hardly add that he excommunicates himself also, if indeed he is in communion with the Roman See and the Catholic Church of God ...Let him hasten before all things to satisfy the Roman See, for if it is satisfied, all will agree in calling him pious and orthodox. For he only speaks in vain who thinks he ought to persuade or entrap persons like myself, and does not satisfy and implore the blessed Pope of the most holy Catholic Church of the Romans, that is, the Apostolic See, which is from the incarnate of the Son of God Himself, and also all the holy synods, according to the holy canons and definitions has received universal and supreme dominion, authority, and power of binding and loosing over all the holy churches of God throughout the whole world." (Maximus, *Letter to Peter*, in Mansi x, 692).

St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople (758-828 A.D.)

"Without whom (the Romans presiding in the seventh Council) a doctrine brought forward in the Church could not, even though confirmed by canonical decrees and by ecclesiastical usage, ever obtain full approval or currency. For it is they (the Popes of Rome) who have had assigned to them the rule in sacred things, and who have received into their hands the dignity of headship among the Apostles." (Nicephorus, *Niceph. Cpl. pro. s. imag. c 25* [Mansi N. Bibl. pp. ii. 30]).

St. Theodore the Studite of Constantinople (759-826 A.D.)

Writing to Pope Leo III

Since to great Peter Christ our Lord gave the office of Chief Shepherd after entrusting him with the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, to Peter or his successor must of necessity every novelty in the Catholic Church be referred. [Therefore], save us, oh most divine Head of Heads, Chief Shepherd of the Church of Heaven." (Theodore, *Bk. I. Ep. 23*)

Writing to Pope Paschal, ...

"Hear, O Apostolic Head, divinely-appointed Shepherd of Christ's sheep, keybearer of the Kingdom of Heaven, Rock of the Faith upon whom the Catholic Church is built. For Peter

art thou, who adornest and governest the Chair of Peter. Hither, then, from the West, imitator of Christ, arise and repel not for ever (Ps. xliii. 23). To thee spake Christ our Lord: 'And thou being one day converted, shalt strengthen thy brethren.' Behold the hour and the place. Help us, thou that art set by God for this. Stretch forth thy hand so far as thou canst. Thou hast strength with God, through being the first of all. (Letter of St. Theodore and four other Abbots to Pope Paschal, Bk. ii Ep. 12, Patr. Graec. 99, 1152-3)

Writing to Emperor Michael, ...

"Order that the declaration from old Rome be received, as was the custom by Tradition of our Fathers from of old and from the beginning. For this, O Emperor, is the highests of the Churches of God, in which first Peter held the Chair, to whom the Lord said: 'Thou art Peter ...and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' (Theodore, Bk. II. Ep. 86)

"I witness now before God and men, they have torn themselves away from the Body of Christ, from the Supreme See (Rome), in which Christ placed the keys of the Faith, against which the gates of hell (I mean the mouth of heretics) have not prevailed, and never will until the Consummation, according to the promise of Him Who cannot lie. Let the blessed and Apostolic Paschal (Pope St. Paschal I) rejoice therefore, for he has fulfilled the work of Peter." (Theodore Bk. II. Ep. 63).

"In truth we have seen that a manifest successor of the prince of the Apostles presides over the Roman Church. We truly believe that Christ has not deserted the Church here (Constantinople), for assistance from you has been our one and only aid from of old and from the beginning by the providence of God in the critical times. You are, indeed the untroubled and pure fount of orthodoxy from the beginning, you the calm harbor of the whole Church, far removed from the waves of heresy, you the God-chosen city of refuge." (Letter of St. Theodor & Four Abbots to Pope Paschal).

"Let him (Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople) assemble a synod of those with whom he has been at variance, if it is impossible that representatives of the other Patriarchs should be present, a thing which might certainly be if the Emperor should wish the Western Patriarch (the Roman Pope) to be present, to whom is given authority over an ecumenical synod; but let him make peace and union by sending his synodical letters to the prelate of the First See." (Theodore the Studite, Patr. Graec. 99, 1420)

St Cyril & St Methodius (865 A.D.)

"It is not true, as this Canon states, that the holy Fathers gave the primacy to old Rome because it was the capital of the Empire; it is from on high, from divine grace, that this primacy drew its origin. Because of the intensity of his faith Peter, the first of the Apostles, was addressed in these words by our Lord Jesus Christ himself 'Peter, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep'. That is why in hierarchical order Rome holds the pre-eminent place and is the first See. That is why the leges of old Rome are eternally immovable, and that is the view of all the Churches" (Methodius ---N. Brianchaninov, The Russian Church (1931), 46; cited by Butler, Church and Infallibility, 210) (Upon This Rock (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), p. 177).

"Because of his primacy, the Pontiff of Rome is not required to attend an Ecumenical Council; but without his participation, manifested by sending some subordinates, every Ecumenical Council is as non-existent, for it is he who presides over the Council." (Ibid.) St. Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022): "One should not contradict the Latins when they say that the Bishop of Rome is the first. This primacy is not harmful to the Church. Let them only prove his faithfulness to the faith of Peter and to that of the successors of Peter. If it is so, let him enjoy all the privileges of Pontiff. Let the Bishop of Rome be successor of the orthodoxy of Sylvester and Agatho, of Leo, Liberius, Martin and Gregory, then we also will call him Apostolic and the first among the other bishops; then we also will obey him, not only as Peter, but as the Savior Himself." (Symeon the New Theologian, Dialogue Against Heresies 23, PG 155:120 AC; cited in Meyendorff, The Primacy of Peter).