

“Oh, the depth of the riches and **WISDOM** and knowledge of God!”

When I prepare a homily I like to find the connectedness of all three readings from scripture. The connections don’t always jump out at me, like from readings of the parables of the New Testament or the innuendos of the Old Testament. Sometimes even the meaning of the plain text, the **ORDINARY** words, seem elusive.

Sure, you probably all caught the similarities of the first reading in Isaiah and the Gospel of Matthew – the keys that open and shut, and the binding and loosing of things on earth and in heaven – but where does Paul’s letter to the Romans fit in? I think I found the answer in the very first line – “Oh, the depth of the riches and **WISDOM** and knowledge of God!”

**WISDOM.** This brings it all together. God used the prophets, Isaiah in this case, to offer guidance to the leaders of the Jewish people, God’s Chosen. Sometimes they listened, sometimes they didn’t. After a time the people were left to chose their own leaders, and didn’t always make a wise choice. This is the case of Shebna, one who used his position for his own gain. When God sends us messengers with good advice, sharing his **WISDOM** with us, it is good that we take heed and listen. We need to be wise enough to choose the right person for the right job, especially if we expect them to lead us well.

When it came to picking Eliakim and Simon Peter to lead his people, His wisdom is beyond reproach. Isaiah tells us that Eliakim would be a “peg in a sure spot.” A PEG – something small that holds things together. As an example, the Japanese build their temples from wood, boring out holes so that the beams can be **FIRMLY** connected to one another with wooden pegs, instead of nails. In a similar way, Eliakim was to be that firm connector, the peg, holding tightly together the people of Israel to God again. Just as we today have the Pope, a descendant in the line of Simon Peter, the **first peg** of the New Testament, whom through God’s wisdom, it was revealed the true person of Jesus Christ. And throughout the ages we are still **FIRMLY** connected.

By that declaration of Simon Peter to Jesus, Jesus renamed him “Peter”, **ROCK**, and it is upon his shoulders that the church would be built. Even though Peter would betray his Lord due to his weak human nature, his spiritual nature would be strengthened through the Holy Spirit, giving him and the other Apostles the strength to carry on the mission of Jesus.

That same Holy Spirit resides with us still today, nourishing us with the graces needed to carry on in our own faith and daily lives. The graces needed for us to be Christ to others – to share when we can; to be a pillar of strength when we ourselves feel like crumbling to the ground; to be a shoulder for those who are burdened to rest upon. The rock is Peter, upon the unshakeable foundation of Jesus, and **our** strength comes from knowing and believing in our faith, and trusting in God’s wisdom.

Peter was also given the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Isaiah also referred to keys, the keys of the House of David, being given to Eliakim. For him what doors “he opens, no one shall shut; and when he shuts, no one shall open.” Similarly, Peter is given the power to bind and to loose both on earth and in heaven.

So, **KEYS** are a symbol of power. Not a bad analogy for us today for we all have keys – for our home, our car, maybe even an office or building. We have the **POWER** to open and close doors; to let some in, and to keep others out. And as with any power there comes **RESPONSIBILITY**, responsibility to use that power wisely and for the benefit of others rather than ourselves. We have the power and responsibility to make wise decisions, especially when it comes to choosing right or wrong. We have the power to choose what we do and don’t do, and the responsibility to choose wisely. The **key** is **wisdom**, and we gain that through prayerful discernment - talking with, and listening to, God.

The peg, the rock, the keys, the **WISDOM** of God. It all comes together in God. “For from him and through him and for him are all things. To **Him** be glory forever. Amen.”