



interpretation of the passages above. [23] In all these passages, Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of apostles, as appears from the text itself. **Christ** does not ask Peter alone, when He says, “Who do you say that I am?” [Matthew 16: 15]. What is said here to Peter alone in the singular number, “I will give you [singular] the keys; and whatever you [singular] bind” [16: 19], is elsewhere expressed in the plural [e.g., Matthew 18: 18,] “Whatever you [plural] bind”; [John 20: 23,] “If you [plural] forgive the sins of anyone”). These words show that the Keys are given to all the apostles alike and that all the apostles are sent forth alike.

[24] In addition, it must be recognized that the Keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to **the Church**. Many most clear and firm arguments show this. For Christ, speaking about the Keys, adds, for example, “If two of you agree on earth” (Matthew 18: 19). Therefore, He grants the Keys first and directly to **the Church**. This is why it is first the Church that has the right of calling. <For just as the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church, so the Keys belong immediately **to the entire Church**, because the Keys are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to every one who desires it, just as it is actually manifest that the Church has the power to ordain ministers of the **Church**. **And Christ** speaks in these words: Whatsoever you shall bind, etc., and indicates to whom **He has given the Keys, namely, to the Church**: Where two or three are gathered together in My name. Likewise, Christ gives supreme and final jurisdiction **to the Church** when He says: Tell it unto the Church.>

Therefore, these passages demonstrate that Peter is the representative of the entire [25] As for the declaration “on this rock I will build My church” [Matthew 16: 18], certainly **the Church** has not been built upon the authority of a man. Rather, it has been built upon the ministry of the confession Peter made, in which he proclaims that **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God** [Matthew 16: 16]. Therefore, **Christ** addresses Peter as a minister, “On this rock,” that is, this ministry. <Therefore, He addresses him as a minister of this office in which this confession and doctrine is to be in operation and says: “Upon this rock,” i.e., this preaching and preaching office.>

[26] Furthermore, the ministry of the New Testament is not bound to places and persons like the Levitical [Old Testament] ministry was. Rather, it is spread throughout the whole world. **That is where God gives His gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers [Ephesians 4: 11]**. Nor does this ministry work because of the authority of any person, but because of the **Word given by Christ** [Romans 10: 17]. <Nor does the person add anything to this Word and office; it matters not who is preaching and teaching it; if there are hearts who receive and cling to it, to them it is done as they hear and believe.>

[27] Most of **the holy Church Fathers**, such as Origen, Cyprian, Augustine, Hilary, and Bede, interpret the passage “on this rock” in this way, as not referring to the person of Peter. [28] Chrysostom says this: “Upon this rock,” not upon Peter. For He built His Church not upon man, but upon the faith of Peter. But what was his faith? **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** [29] Hilary says: The Father revealed to Peter that he should say, “You are the Son of the living God” [Matthew 16: 17]. **Therefore, the building of the Church is upon this rock of confession. This faith is the foundation of the Church.** [30] As for what is said in John 21: 15– 19, “Feed My lambs,” and “Do you love Me more than these?” it does not follow from this passage that a peculiar superiority was given Peter. **Christ** tells him “feed” (i.e., teach <preach> the Word <the Gospel>, or **rule the Church with the Word <the Gospel>**), which task Peter has in common with the other apostles.

[31] The second article is even clearer. **Christ gave the apostles only spiritual power** (i.e., the command to teach the Gospel, to announce the forgiveness of sins, to administer the Sacraments, to excommunicate the godless without bodily force <by the Word>). He did not give them the power of the sword (the right to establish, occupy, or bestow kingdoms of the world [Romans 13: 4]). **For Christ says**, “Go . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28: 19– 20). Also, “As **the Father has sent Me**, even so I am sending you” (John 20: 21). It is clear that **Christ** was not sent to bear the sword or possess a worldly kingdom, as He Himself says, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18: 36). And Paul says, “Not that we lord it over your faith” (2 Corinthians 1: 24); and “The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh” (2 Corinthians 10: 4), and so forth.

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## LIFE APPLICATION

“Building up the body of Christ”

How does God use us in our daily vocations to do this work?