

## Church authority

To those of you who are interested in **how to defend our catholic faith**, here is a story I heard concerning, the authority given to St. Peter and the church, which helped me to understand this truth. I hope it will help you to understand, remember and explain it to your family, friends and especially christians outside our faith.

The verses used are from Matthew's Gospel, chapter 16 verses 13 thru 19. Jesus and the Apostles are traveling thru Caesarea Philippi. In this area there is a **rock** that is 500 ft. Long by 200 ft. High. That's 5 football fields long by 2 football fields high. There is a hole in the rock so deep that it was not measured, called **the gates of Hades**. This was the setting as Jesus asked the Apostles some questions. First He asked them "Who do men say that the son of man is?" And they said " some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets". I could almost see Him stop walking, turning around, waiting for them all to catch up, letting them all catch up to Him. He then looked into each one's eyes before He asked them, "But who do you say that I am"? Simon Peter replied "YOU are the Christ, the Son of the living God". And Jesus answered Him, " Blessed are you Simon Bar Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter and on this **rock** I will build my church and **the gates of Hades** shall not prevail against it. I will give you the **keys** of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

These verses are the basis for the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church. The binding and loosing are pretty clear. The **keys** have a history locking and unlocking. For a dramatic example of how the **keys** work check out Isaiah chapter 22 verse 22.

When we go back in history to see how people lived, and the customs in the days of Jesus and the Apostles we can understand the Scriptures better than with only today's experiences. But today we can see an example of the Church's authority. Our Bishop has loosed us from the obligation to attend Sunday mass and the obligation to abstain from meat on the Fridays of lent, except Good Friday. This power has been passed down in an unbroken line for 2000 years, from Jesus to St. Peter, to all the Popes, then to the Bishops until the end of the world.

I would like to give credit to Steven Ray for some of the information in this article, which he spoke of in one of his talks.

This article is an example of the things we will be discussing in a future apologetics program we are planning for our parish.