

Why Jesus Chose Peter



Why did Jesus choose Peter (originally named Simon) from among the other disciples to be the foundational leader of His Church? The conversation between Jesus and His disciples in Matthew 16:13-19 reveals how Jesus chose Peter to be the “rock” because of his bold confession of faith. When Jesus 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.” But Jesus pointed the question at them and asked again, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said to Jesus, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

(Mt 16:16) None of the other disciples professed their faith in Jesus – not Andrew, not James or John, nor any of the other disciples – but Peter alone. Jesus said to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.” These words suggest that just as Jesus was about to designate Peter as the “rock” upon which He will build His Church, God the Father was not only in agreement, but more than that, had a hand in it.

Jesus choosing a flawed, ordinary fisherman continues an important theme in the bible: that God works through human weakness by picking the weak and humble over the strong and proud. In the Old Testament, God chose Moses to lead His chosen people out of slavery in Egypt, despite Moses’ attempt to excuse himself, “I have never been eloquent... I am slow of speech and tongue.” (Ex 4:10) God also chose David, a young shepherd boy and the least of Jesse's sons, yet God chose him to be king and to defeat the giant Goliath (cf. 1Sam 16, 17). Another example is Esther, an orphaned Jewish girl who was eventually elevated to the Persian throne and risked her life to thwart the genocide of her people (cf. Es 7-9).

In the New Testament, St. Paul admonishes the early Christians in Corinth to boast only in the Lord: “Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord.” (1Cor 1:31) St. Paul repeated the biblical theme by saying, “God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God.” (1Cor 1:27-29) All glory belongs to God and to God alone.

How can we live out this biblical theme of human weakness and humility in our ordinary lives? A really good way is through complete surrender. Complete surrender to God means letting go of our need to have absolute control in life and to grow our trust in God. It is not a one-time event, but a daily practice of handing our fears, desires and plans over to God. There are four pillars in complete surrender: (1) Let go of control – this means to stop forcing outcomes, and handing over our fears, plans and desires to God, and reminding ourselves that God is in charge, not us. (2) Admit our

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limitations – this means that we should have a realistic view of the world, that we cannot fix or manage everything, and to ask God for courage and strength to face the challenges of each and every day. (3) Recall past grace – this means looking back at how God had carried us through hard times in the past and what we have learned from it. (4) Practice daily surrender – this means letting go of small disappointments and frustrations, scrupulosity, and not worrying about every small thing like it was a major issue that needs to be worried over.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The OCIA Period of Inquiry is now open: During this period, people who have the desire to become Catholic ask questions about the Catholic faith and the OCIA program. All are welcome to contact Fr. Bill or any parish member, join in the celebration of the Eucharist and join the various activities of the parish. If you know anyone who has an interest in becoming Catholic, now is the time to reach out to them and pray for them.

Registration for Sunday School schoolyear 2026-2027 begins on August 16. Classes begin today. We welcome children of all ages to learn the Catholic faith!

We are in the process of developing a Faith Formation program for our teens. We will keep you informed of our progress.

We are offering Chinese language classes this year in the Fall and next year in the Spring. Classes are held on Saturdays and Sundays. Fall Semester begins on August 15 and 16, 2026 and the Spring Semester begins on January 9 and 10, 2027. The 2026 Fall Schedule and the 2027 Spring Schedule have been posted in our church website: hnojatl.org.

We will also have new classes to help our church members converse in the English language. Classes will be held on Sundays after the 10:30am Mass.

Did you know that you can make donations to the church directly from your retirement account? Each time you make a distribution from your retirement account, it is counted as taxable income. However, if you make a donation (up to \$108,000), to qualified charities through QCD (Qualified Charitable Distributions), these donations, although not tax-deductible, are excluded from taxable income. Many older retired donors use this strategy to lower their taxable income, but it also satisfies Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) without increasing their adjusted gross income (AGI). Consult your financial advisor or contact your retirement account specialist.

Prayer List: Bian Cheng Zhang, Susan Lee, Michael Tan, Bian Meiyi, Chen Shupeng, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.
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Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	By Appointment	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)		
	Anointing of the Sick	Eucharistic Adoration
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Sundays 9:00 to 10:00 AM
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	First Fridays after 6:30 PM Mass	
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)		
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 6:30 PM (English)		