

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Who's in Charge?

Today's readings speak of power and the care of those subject to that power. Power exists for good of the powerless. It demands a sense of duty to the people we serve. To be in charge means to protect our charges.

In the first reading, Isaiah is sent to tell Shebna that he will be replaced. He accuses him of show and advising the king to revolt against Assyria. His successor, Eliakim will be fatherly by meeting the needs of the people. He will support the king as a tent peg supports the whole tent by paternal service.

The responsorial praises Yahweh for his covenant loyalty. "On the day I call, you answered me." From his lofty position the Lord responds to the needs of the lowly. His abiding fidelity shows that to be in charge means to protect our charges.

In the Gospel, Peter's new position is not a purely personal attainment. The keys suggest that he will be the new prime minister, as Eliakim in the first reading. He will be the "rock" because he will stability to the Church. The keys represent the authority for teaching, forgiveness of sin, and exorcism. Jesus relate the church to the kingdom. The Church is the interim arrangement which mediates salvation in the time between the earthly Jesus and the second coming.