

CHAIR OF ST PETER

FEBRUARY 22, 2021

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“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Several weeks ago, I was in a conversation with Fr. Michael Wurtz. He mentioned that in his class that day, he invited his students to think about what they worship as he offered them the insight that we all worship something. He suggested to his students that they might discover the truth of what or whom they worship by examining their actions.

On this Feast of the Chair of St. Peter, I invite you and myself to think about the people, structures, and ideas that we grant authority to in our lives. Like Fr. Michael, I suggest that we all grant “authority” to some persons, structures, and ideas. And, I suggest, that we might discover the real authorities in our lives by examining our actions.

In today’s gospel, Peter takes another step in the journey of taking Jesus Christ as the authority for his life. By God’s grace he has proclaimed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God. By God’s grace Peter has been gathered into a community over which he himself will be granted a unique authority, By God’s grace he will one day offer his life in martyrdom in testimony to the authority of Christ in his life.

Of course, there was much stumbling and falling along the way for Peter. He chose, at times, to be his own authority, to have better ideas than Jesus himself, and to deny some aspects of the freedom accorded to those who grant authority over their lives to Christ. Despite all the stumbling and falls, the Risen One, would frame the question of authority for him following the resurrection. “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

Like Peter, as believers we are on the journey of taking Jesus Christ as the authority for our lives. Like Peter, we will stumble along the way. Like Peter, Jesus will ask us again and again, if he is the authority in our lives. Do you love me?

Like Peter, we both have authorities and are authorities for others. Do the persons, structures, and ideas that we have granted authority in our own lives bear witness to love as the heart of reality? Does our exercise of authority over others bear witness to love as the heart of the reality of our lives?

In the King’s College Mission Statement, we quote the Preface to the Feast of Christ the King in speaking of Jesus “who taught by example and ruled by love.” Imagine that in this Lent, you and I allowed the One who loves us beyond all telling to be the ultimate authority in our lives. And imagine that you and I exercised the authority we have as Jesus does.