

ROCKS AND STONES FOR BUILDING

Today, Jesus declares to Peter he is rock and upon this rock he will build the church. There are many kinds of rocks in the world. Igneous rock comes from fiery explosions, like volcanoes. It is fire driven. Some rocks take time to form. Sedimentary rock is pressurized with layers upon layers pressing together to make its formation. Some rock is metamorphic; it is the rock of change. It is a rock that has gone through a transformation in its creation. So when Jesus tells Peter he is rock, it is a term which can invite us to powerful reflections. It is important to note that Jesus did not say, Peter you are this finely polished stone that will be the foundation of the Church. There is a big difference between rock and building bricks or stones. Rock has jagged edges. It is imperfect. Building bricks or stones are cut and meant to fit in a certain way.

We celebrate Peter and his ability to be bold in his proclamations, but at the same time fearful. He walked on water, but he doubted. He tells the Lord he would never deny him and then he goes out and denies him three times in the same night. Peter is a conflicted mess. This is good and perfect news for us. As we are called to be Church, we have to realize God loves us with our jagged edges. He did not call us to be finished polished cornerstones or bricks. He calls us to be the mess that we are and He loves us. Our imperfections are exactly what the Lord expects of us. Too often we try to be perfect. We try to be something we are not. In these times we move far away from God's plan. He understands rock, He understands that just like everyone has a different fingerprint so are we the pieces of a Church that is imperfect on a journey to be a vehicle. This vehicle is to get us closer to God.

I heard once from a theologian in Texas the best definition of Church. He said Church is like an old pickup truck. It has a few dents, the windshield wipers need replacing, the blinker sometimes works and sometimes doesn't. Yet it is the only pickup truck we have, so we put in the key and start the engine and use it.

The Church is a vehicle. It is imperfect, it has many strengths and weaknesses, yet it is what God has given to us through divine revelation, therefore we use it. It offers us powerful sacramental grace. On this day may we rejoice in Jesus building a Church crafted out of our imperfections.



Father John Ouper