

It would be kind of odd if Jesus left the Church here on Earth with no structure, especially with no authority in place, But Jesus established a structure and authority to help ensure the Church remains focused on her mission of evangelization. The authority of the Church protects against Jesus' words being misinterpreted or misused. It protects God's law so we can find fulfillment and not become led astray into sin. □

When Jesus appointed the twelve apostles and sent them forth to make disciples of all nations, He entrusted them with the task of founding His Church and passing on His teachings in their entirety, from generation to generation. The first apostles appointed new apostles by laying hands on them. Those apostles made new apostles the same way – and this continues to the present day.

This is important for safeguarding and maintaining the mission of the Church. By having a hierarchy we can have a definitive teaching body that has the authority to interpret Scripture for us and guide us spiritually. This teaching body is called the Magisterium. The Magisterium is made up of the College of Bishops (the entire group of bishops from around the world – the successors of the apostles) with the Bishop of Rome, the Pope.

But where do we find this structure in Scripture?

And how do we know that this is what Jesus intended?

- 1) Read Isaiah 22:20-24 – ***Does this sound familiar to you at all?***
- 2) Read Matthew 16:17-19 – ***What similarities do you see in these two passages?***

Steward & Vicar

Eliakim is given the keys to the palace and appointed as the *steward*. At that time, the steward was given full authority – both over the kingdom's treasure and its walls, meaning who could come in. ***What does this mean, then, that Jesus gives Peter the keys to the kingdom?***

The steward was responsible for the keys, but also placed as "vicar" who is responsible for governing when the king is away. ***So, why do you think Catholics call the Pope the "Vicar of Christ on earth"?***

Succession

When Eliakim was appointed steward and vicar, David had been dead 200+ years. This tells us that for 200 years, the Israelites continued a tradition of passing on authority. ***How do Catholics continue the tradition of passing on authority even today?***

- 3) Read 2 Kings 24:17 - ***What other times in Scripture in someone given a new name?***
There is a biblical tradition for a person receiving a new name when they are given a special role or authority – or when a new covenant is made. ***Why does Jesus give Simon a new name? What does it tell us about Peter?***