



## Minute of Mercy

### CHURCH AUTHORITY

*As Catholics, we are often confronted with questions, doubts, and even attacks concerning the authority of Holy Mother Church. Do we know and understand the Church's hierarchy? More importantly, how do we respond in charity to our Protestant brothers and sisters?*

*Most of our Protestant brethren rely upon the concept of "Sola Scriptura" (scripture alone). In stark contrast, the Catholic Church confirms Her authority from Scripture and Oral Tradition. We can distinguish three stages in the formation of the Gospels: 1) The life and teaching of Jesus; 2) The oral tradition; and 3) The written Gospels. [CCC 126]*

*Through a revelation from the Father, Peter confessed: **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** Our Lord then declared to him: **"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."** (Matt 16:18) With this, Jesus entrusts the keys to the Kingdom to Peter who is given primacy among the apostles. For all the apostles, Jesus gives them the power and authority to "bind and loose" sins which is, in other words, the power for absolution of sins. Another verse confirms the authority of the Church with this example: **"Whoever listens to you, listens to Me, whoever rejects you, rejects Me. Whoever rejects Me, rejects the one Who sent me."** (Luke 10:16) Both of these verses of scripture validate the Church's belief and shows that authority was given to Her by Christ Himself. Thus, the Magisterium's task is to preserve God's people from deviations and defection and to guarantee them the objective possibility of professing the true faith without error. This is the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals. [CCC 890] One obligation as Catholics in regard to Church authority is obedience, obedience of faith. We must read and study Scripture as St. Peter exhorts us **"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope."** (1 Peter 3:15) As St. Jerome, who was commissioned by Pope Damasus I in 382 to gather and examine all Holy Scriptures and translate them into Latin, tells us, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ."*

### Mercy in Action

*This week's **Mercy in Action** is for all of St. Peter Parish to pray for our Holy Father Pope Francis, and his Roman Curia as he leads the church in ways of God's mercy.*