Saint Peter had always been an enthusiastic follower of Jesus. His faith was generous and open, but also subject to the limits of human weakness. “The school of faith,” recalled Pope Benedict XVI, “is not a triumphal march but a journey marked daily by suffering and love, trials and faithfulness. Peter, who promised absolute fidelity, knew the bitterness and humiliation of denial: the arrogant man learns the costly lesson of humility. Peter, too, must learn that he is weak and in need of forgiveness. Once his attitude changes and he understands the truth of his weak heart of a believing sinner, he weeps in a fit of liberating repentance. After this weeping he is finally ready for his mission” (General Audience, May 24, 2006).

When, on that fateful day on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias, Peter encountered the risen Lord, he received the mission that set him apart from the other apostles and he learned an important lesson in reconciliation and love. Jesus invites Peter to profess his love three times, restoring the relationship that had been damaged by his three denials the night before Jesus died. But Jesus also recognized the undiscovered gifts that lay dormant within Peter and entrusted him with a special mission: Feed my sheep.

Soon after the Ascension, we see Peter using the gifts that God had given him when, in Jerusalem, he refused to stop preaching in Jesus’ name (cf. Acts 5:27-41). The conviction of Peter and the other apostles (celebrated especially in the Acts of the Apostles) reminds us that our faith and commitment to the Gospel place demands upon us and can involve sacrifice and suffering. For Peter, this ultimately meant martyrdom in Rome. For Christians throughout the ages, up to our own time, faith continues to call for a witness to those values and truths that transcend the trials and struggles of our day-to-day lives.
Working for peace, justice, the promotion of human life, and the spread of the good news are tasks entrusted to every follower of Jesus. As Saint John Paul II observed in *Redemptoris Missio* (his encyclical on the mission of the Church): “The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion... an overall view of the human race shows this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service. It is the Spirit who impels us to proclaim the great works of God” (1).

To be Christian means working to build up God’s kingdom here and now, recognizing and promoting God’s action in the world, “working for liberation from evil in all its forms. In a word, the kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God’s plan of salvation in all its fullness” (Redemptoris Missio, 15). And so, while we celebrate Peter’s call and mission this Sunday, we are also being invited to reflect on how God is calling us—as individuals and as the Church—to continue that special mission in our homes, parishes, and communities.

*Silas S. Henderson, MTS*
CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS APPEAL

EASTER URBI ET ORBI MESSAGE

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY
A draft of the schedule for Pope Francis’ trip to Poland from July 27 to 31 for the 31st World Youth Day was presented in Krakow on Saturday. The provisional schedule may be viewed at http://www.news.va/en/news/wyd-krakow-2016-draft-schedule-released.

PRAYER
Grant, we pray, almighty God, that no tempests may disturb us, for you have set us fast on the rock of the Apostle Peter’s confession of faith. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

—Collect from the Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter the Apostle. Excerpt from the English translation of The Roman Missal © 2010, ICEL. All rights reserved.

To learn more about LPi’s services and publications designed to help you build a vibrant parish please visit our website: www.4LPi.com

Liturgical Publications Inc
2875 S. James Drive • New Berlin, WI 53151
(800) 950-9952 ext. 2469

Send email address changes to: lpiconnections@4LPi.com

To opt out of receiving this midweek reflection as part of your Connect! subscription, contact: lpiconnections@4LPi.com

Copyright ©2015, Liturgical Publications Inc. All rights reserved.