

Who's in Charge?

There are lots of reasons one could be in charge. You might be the only one left to do the job. Or, in the case of babysitting, you might simply be older. You could be in charge because you are a bully with the biggest fists, sticks, or guns. Or you might be in charge because you are the best qualified for the job. Today's readings offer us two stories about being chosen for leadership.

In the Old Testament reading, Shebna, an official in King Hezekiah's court, overreached his position of authority. He was demoted and replaced by Eliakim. Carrying the key symbolizes authority over the entire household. Placing it on the shoulder suggests an investiture ceremony. In the Gospel, entrusting Peter with the keys to the kingdom of heaven suggests similar authority, though in a significantly different household.

In both instances the position of authority is meant to be exercised for the benefit of the members of the

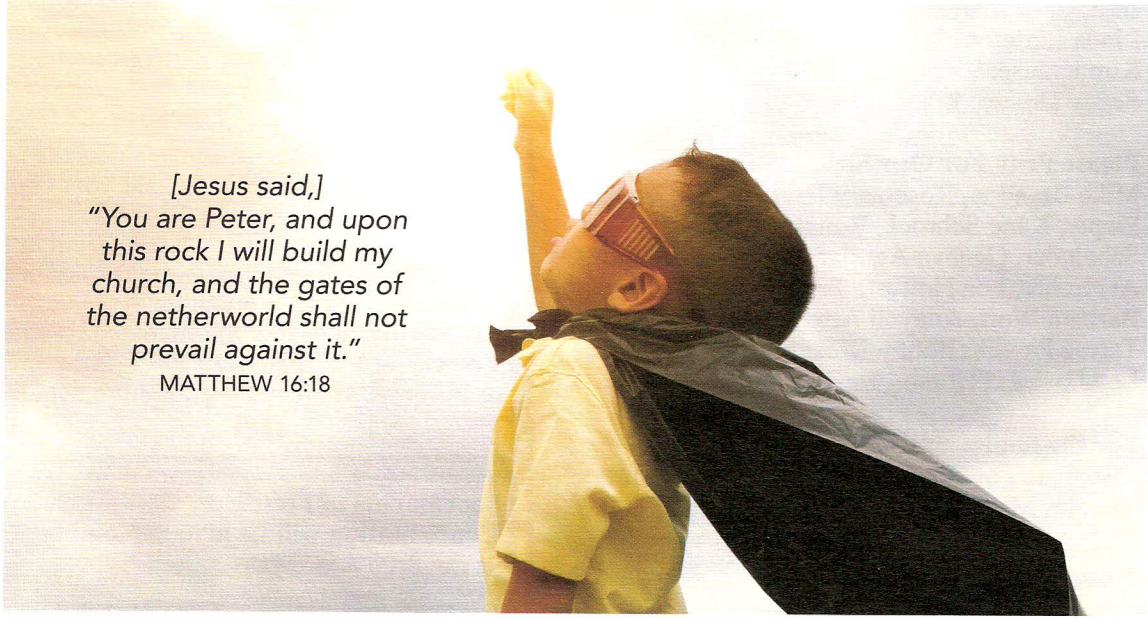
respective household. It was precisely because of his failure in this matter that Shebna was demoted and Eliakim placed in charge. What about Peter? The Gospel tells us that the choice of Peter followed his remarkable statement of faith: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

These stories tell us that God chooses very ordinary people for positions of leadership. Why them? Are they the only ones left? Are they the oldest? Were they the best qualified? It was not because they were bullies. Obviously God thought they could do the job.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- ▣ *It's not easy being a leader of God's people. Pray for those who have been called to that role.*
- ▣ *Have you ever thought of volunteering to serve on a church committee?*



*[Jesus said,]
"You are Peter, and upon
this rock I will build my
church, and the gates of
the netherworld shall not
prevail against it."*

MATTHEW 16:18

