

Christians in Rome had become a significant presence by 49 A.D., long before either Peter or Paul arrived there. Many believers in Christ would have come from Rome's thriving Jewish population. The organisation of the church in Rome reflected that Jewish community in having no central organisation and comprising many independent churches meeting in wealthy houses, each with its own leaders. They attracted numerous immigrants, including slaves and freedmen. By the end of the 1st century several non-Roman Christian communities had adopted a more formal structure of a local bishop supported by a college of elders, this development being in part due to the need to have an authoritative body to stem the flow of heretical teaching which had begun to spread. However, that there was no bishop in Rome as late as 107 A.D., appears from a letter by Ignatius of Antioch who was brought to the city to be martyred in that year. This is even though some 10 years earlier a document attributed to St Clement (listed in ancient lists as the 3rd pope after Peter) is sometimes considered to be the first papal encyclical. In fact Clement did not claim to write as bishop and the letter was sent on behalf of the whole Roman Christian community. Therefore, historically, there was as yet no Bishop of Rome in the early second century.

(1) Professor Eamon Duffy (1997)

-*Stephen. S*

Entrance Antiphon: O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

First Reading: *Joanah 3 1-5,10*

Responsorial Psalm: 24 Response: Lord, make me know your ways.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! The kingdom of God is close at hand; believe the Good New. Alleluia!

Gospel: Mark 1:14-20

Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B, 2024 Weekly

Reflection: The Emergence of the

Papacy (1) I have recently been reading "*Saints & Sinners – A History of the Popes*" (1). The opening chapter explains how the papacy arose. Based on that chapter,

these 2 articles attempt to summarise the position from Christ's ascension to the point where the Bishop of Rome was generally perceived as the leader of the Christian church. Jesus had told St Peter that upon his name 'Petrus' (the rock) He would found His church and to Peter were to be given the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. Within 10 years of the ascension, the new faith had spread, primarily through the efforts of St Paul, from the Holy Land to many countries in the Roman Empire, and to Rome itself. St Paul was unlike any of the 12 apostles. He was a Roman citizen, a Greek-speaking, educated rabbi who had never met Jesus during His time on earth. Though Paul was the dominant figure in the early decades of the Church, he was never its leader.

St Peter had been with Jesus from the outset of His ministry. All the Gospels have him as the main spokesman for the twelve. His name appears first in every list, it is he who recognises Jesus as Messiah at Caesarea Philippi, and he is the first of the very few to witness His transfiguration. To him was given the power that whatever he bound/loosed on earth would be bound/loosed in heaven. Peter is central to the Pentecost events, related in the Acts of the Apostles. And yet the Gospels do not expressly state that the powers and privileges given by Christ to Peter were transmissible to any successor. Nevertheless, as Professor Duffy states: "*..it is hard to account for the continuing interest in Peter in the Gospels and Acts unless Peter's authority continued to be meaningful after his death*". Passages in Matthew's Gospel imply that Peter's authority continued in the Christian community. Similarly, in 1 Peter 5, Peter writes: "*...as an elder myselfI exhort the elders among you ² to tend the flock of God that is in your charge...*". This seems a clear echo of Jesus telling Peter: "*Feed my lambs.... feed my sheep.*"