

Spiritual Leadership as Representative

by Robert Osborne

The Current Moment:

Two buzzwords are in the air these days: leadership and spirituality. I want to explore the idea of how spirituality and leadership intersect by thinking about spiritual leadership from the vantage point of one New Testament window, the selection of a replacement for the departed Judas in Acts 1. Though we will not be able to build a comprehensive idea of spiritual leadership from this point in the Biblical story, there are some suggestive insights we can glean from this moment in early church history. In our text we will see that different questions yield different answers. We will see that the Christian community must accept the paradox inherent within its leadership, that it is both a function (it has a work to do) and a symbol (it represents the meaning of the community). I will affirm that the symbolic value of spiritual leadership, its representative nature, was an aspect of spiritual leadership that the early church affirmed of prime importance.

It is helpful to notice how the shape of a question determines its answer.¹ Our questions are not neutral but revealing of how we think, what we believe about reality, and what we value. The current interest in both spirituality and leadership does not necessarily mean that our culture has come to embrace transcendent moral good, or that we now recognize our need for a moral and spiritual center from which to live. In fact, it appears more and more that current leadership language is merely a further entrenchment of the values of efficiency and productivity that inspire our business culture. In many ways, current leadership literature appears to be a triumph of the technical mindset, now baptized and moralized, and given some kind of moral

¹ Neil Postman. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. Knopf: New York, 1992. pp. 125-127. "... as in the case of two priests who, being unsure if it was permissible to smoke and pray at the same time, wrote to the Pope for a definitive answer. One priest phrased the question, 'Is it permissible to smoke while praying?' and was told it was not, since prayer should be the focus of one's whole attention; the other priest asked if it was permissible to pray while smoking and was told it is, since it is always permissible to pray".

Postman goes on to give another example: "Once upon a time, in a village in Lithuania, there arose an unusual problem. A curious disease afflicted many of the townspeople. It was mostly fatal (though not always), and its onset was signaled by the victim's lapsing into a deathlike coma. Medical science not being quite so advanced as it is now, there was no definite way of knowing if the victim was actually dead when burial appeared seemly. As a result, the townspeople feared that several of their relatives had already been buried alive and that a similar fate might await them. How to overcome this uncertainty was their dilemma. One group of people suggested that the coffins be well stocked with water and food and that a small air vent be drilled into them, just in case one of the 'dead' happened to be alive. This was expensive to do but seemed more than worth the trouble. A second group, however, came up with a less-expensive and more efficient idea. Each coffin would have a twelve-inch stake affixed to the inside of the coffin lid, exactly at the level of the heart. Then, when the coffin was closed, all uncertainty would cease."

Postman comments: "The story does not indicate which solution was chosen... [but] what is important to note is that different solutions were generated by different questions. The first solution was an answer to the question, 'how can we make sure that we do not bury people who are still alive?' The second was an answer to the question, 'how can we make sure that everyone we bury is dead'.

grounding (more on this later). But the question should well be asked: lead where? Dallas Willard, in his highly praised study of the Sermon on the Mount, *The Divine Conspiracy*, tells this anecdote:

“Recently a pilot was practicing high-speed maneuvers in a jet fighter. She turned the controls for what she thought was a steep ascent – and flew straight into the ground. She was unaware that she had been flying upside down. This is a parable of human existence in our times.²

I want to ask: what if humanity is flying upside down? What good would it do to empower leadership in that state? Perhaps empowering leadership is not our first concern. Perhaps teaching which way is up is more important.

Of course, it is the task of the church to nurture spiritual leadership and this it has done since its beginning. But spiritual leadership is precisely that kind of leadership that has gained a good sense of the ground. And therefore, an uncritical openness to non-biblical paradigms of leadership is not helpful to the nature of our spiritual mission. Many contemporary observers see the church’s leadership drifting away from its core practice, becoming more comfortable with the technical and the managerial than the spiritual and the reflective. Os Guinness quotes a Japanese CEO in regards to this common deficiency of present Christian ministry: “Whenever I meet a Buddhist leader, I meet a holy man in touch with another world. Whenever I meet a Christian leader, I meet a manager at home only in this world like I am.”³ A return to a more Biblically shaped idea of leadership is necessary for the church to reclaim its distinctive mission in the world.

Make no mistake; the return to the concepts of leadership and spirituality in popular conversation is both fascinating and instructive for us in the church. It doesn’t require prophetic insight to say that the future belongs to the reclamation of the spiritual and the reclamation of moral courage. The cycles of history tell us that God always makes a comeback and that he does so through the agency of men and women of deep moral courage and profound spiritual awareness. The church’s greatest moment of opportunity will be realized as it looks into its own history, seeking to discover what genuine spiritual leadership looks like. In the following, I will assert that spiritual leadership – Biblically defined – looks different from the kind of leadership that our culture promotes. Spiritual leadership is more *representative* than functional, more *symbolic* than managerial, more *exemplary* than supervisory.

John Paul II’s pastoral letter *Evangelium vitae* (Gospel of Life, 1995) calls our attention to what he called our “culture of death”. He said that one way that this was being perpetuated was an “idea of society excessively concerned with efficiency”. In other words, if everything is reduced to technique, to process, to speed, to cost, to the fastest and easiest and most efficient way, then life itself will have a hard time flourishing. This

² Dallas Willard. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998, pp. 1-2

³ Os Guinness. *The Call*. Word Publishing: Nashville, 1998. p. 157-158

over-valuing of efficiency, he goes on to say, is not helpful to the weak and small, to the powerless and marginalized. In such a system, preference tends to flow towards the fast and smart, the strong and connected. I want to suggest that John Paul's analysis is helpful to us in protestant spiritual leadership who are continually tempted to follow in the way of our culture, to be squeezed into its mold. When everything has become a technique, then even aspects of life like leadership and spirituality get yanked out of the personal and moral and mysteriously intangible, becoming means of getting what one wants, means to assert self-will. This is not only death to culture but death to the spiritual life of the church which stands for the weak and small, the repentant and heart-broken, the confused and lost. Who are the leaders who represent and understand this way of Jesus, this way of the cross?

Let's take a step back and assert that leadership in the Biblical frame of reference is not a means to assert self-will. Biblical leadership begins with a commitment to follow Christ no matter the cost. Spiritual leadership takes a completely different track than normal human leadership; it involves the yielding of will to be a servant of divine purpose, to follow in the way of Jesus. Spiritual leadership is profoundly built on an ethic of love and service. Spiritual leadership without a moral and spiritual core is a Biblical contradiction in terms. Leadership without morality and spirituality, in the Biblical frame of reference, is an oxymoron. Leadership in any direction other than into the cross-shaped life of Christ is leadership in the wrong direction, leadership that has lost sense of its ground and does not know which way is up. But if the shape of the question determines our answer, what is our question?

If leadership is construed as maximizing efficiency, than it will cast about for ways to do that – it will see leadership as technique. I suggest that leadership in the Biblical frame of reference starts at a very different point, mainly because it has nothing of the technical culture in mind. Efficiency and productivity are the furthest things from its view; truth and witness are the values it prizes. Spiritual leadership is by definition moral and spiritual, or it is a failure and a contradiction in terms.

Certainly leadership is vital to the development of Christian community, something the early Christian community saw quite clearly.⁴ And since the early Christians understood themselves to be a spiritual community, they endorsed a leadership paradigm fitting to their purpose. The events of the days between Ascension and Pentecost give us insight into how the early Christian community, and its first leaders, saw the leadership task. In obedience to Christ's word of promise they waited for the blessing of the Spirit, and in waiting they did two things: they prayed (Acts 1:14), and they settled their leadership questions (Acts 1:23), and each informed the other. They did not choose leaders apart from the practice of their spirituality (prayer),⁵ and the leaders they chose were persons

⁴ Acts 1:21; "... it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us..."

⁵ Acts 1:24, the practice of prayer is the basic spiritual practice after the ascension of Christ

of spiritual practice (being followers of Jesus).⁶ Leadership in the early Christian community wasn't selected to do organizational work *per se*, but to do the work of witness and prayer. While current leadership thinking suggests that human initiative is fundamental to human achievement, the leaders of the first Christian community saw the importance of leadership from a different vantage point. For the early church, leadership was spiritually ordered, responding to the initiatives of God, empowered for its task by the Holy Spirit, shaped by the model of Jesus the servant.

Acts 1:

In the days after Jesus' ascension, just before Pentecost, we see the community feeling the need to respond to Judas' departure. It was not a knee-jerk reaction but one that was processed through time and prayer. The community felt the need to deal with the Judas question because "he was one of our number and shared in this ministry" (Acts 1:17). So they enter the process of deliberation prayerfully, seeking Biblical and communal wisdom. Their process brought them to two paradoxical conclusions, each with Biblical support:

- that Judas' place of leadership should be left empty (using Psalm 69:25 as their source text, "*May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it*")
- that Judas' place of leadership should be filled (using Psalm 109:18 as their source text, "*May another take his place of leadership*")

They carried a tension that could only be resolved through prayerful communal interaction helped along by their fresh reading of Scriptural precedence. Through this process, they embodied the truth that conflicting ideas, even paradoxical ideas, often yield profound truth.

The community wrestled with the fundamental idea of what their leadership would constitute for them, and the form of the question mattered. On the one hand, if the question was, "do we need another leader like Judas?" the answer was "let his spot be left vacant". Judas had come to represent leadership-as-title only (one of the distinguished Twelve, but one which Jesus had earlier hinted was a devil nevertheless⁷). Titles and roles cannot make us different from what we are; neither can leadership functions and tasks. We stand before God and our communities as persons – not roles, and not positions. We are known ultimately for who we are and not for what we do. Judas had the name of an apostle without fulfilling the calling of an apostle. His service amounted to nothing more than function: handling the money, taking care of the apostolic business, traveling around with Jesus and the Twelve. But time showed him unequal to his title. Judas proved to be the antithesis of the apostolic calling in that he failed to witness Christ. His failure was not so much his own weakness; it was rather more profoundly his rejection of Christ as "weak-for-him". Judas' failure was that he could not allow Christ to save him, to help him in his struggle, to bring him through his

⁶ Acts 1:21-22, following Jesus is the foundational paradigm of their spirituality and so becomes the basic requirement of the church's apostolic leadership

⁷ John 6:70, "Have I not chosen you The Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil"

own human failure. Peter and the others also failed, but they were brought back. Judas' ultimate sin was to reject grace, to reject the crucified Jesus, to despise the bread of kindness (John 13:27), to sell Jesus for personal and temporal benefit. The early Christian community quickly decided that they didn't need the Judas-kind of leader (a mere functionary); they needed leaders as witnesses of Christ's glory, leaders as representatives of Christ's reconciling act, leaders who believed, leaders who had come by the way of repentance and forgiveness. Despite the massive failure of the apostolic band at the time of Jesus' arrest and trial, the community's leadership stayed present to the unfolding grace of God as it came to them over that first Easter season. Judas had abandoned that possibility, choosing instead the pride of his own way. In this way, his place was to remain vacant.

But there was another way to ask the question. When they asked themselves, "should there be another to continue the symbolism of the twelve?" the answer was affirmative. The reasons again have to do with the representative nature of spiritual leadership. The new Christian community saw themselves in continuity with Israel as the people of blessing, now newly constituted in Christ. The twelve apostles⁸ were first and foremost symbolic of the foundation of this new community in the way Jacob's twelve sons were symbolic of the nation that was born from Abraham's seed through Jacob (Israel). The twelve sons of Jacob became the twelve tribes of Israel (with additions and deletions) which became, in time, the fullness of God's covenant people. The fluidity of those tribes (some were added, some were excluded) did not change the significance of the twelve. Just so, which apostles were in or out (Judas out, Matthias in) did not change the significance of the Twelve for the church. It was not a negotiable number for it was symbolic of what had begun in Christ. One of the names may change, but the Church of Jesus Christ had begun on the foundation of Christ's witnesses, the apostles, the representatives of the new order.⁹

The criteria for the selection of Judas' replacement are further suggestive of how the first Christian community understood their leaders. The new apostle was required to have been a follower of Jesus from the beginning of his appearing to Israel, one who was well acquainted with the meaning of the Jesus story including the capstone of the story, the resurrection itself.¹⁰ The new apostle was therefore selected for no other recorded reason than that he was a witness: an observer, someone with a personal experience, a faithful follower and reporter. He had no other reported qualification. The new apostle was not asked to be creative, but faithful. Again, Judas' legacy was as the lone "initiator" among the Twelve in the Jesus' story – he alone tried to shape the story to his own wished outcome.¹¹ It was his self-initiated actions that were not only

⁸ The significance of the number of the apostles can be seen in the way the apostolic band came to be known as The Twelve, a technical term for their position within the church regardless of how many actual apostles there were.

⁹ The significance of this can be seen in the ecclesiology of the early church in regards to the position of the original twelve (Ephesians 2:20; Rev. 4-5)

¹⁰ Acts 1:21-22

¹¹ The reason/s for Judas' betrayal of Jesus can only be speculated. What we can be sure of is that Judas had a reason to "betray" Jesus to the authorities and that he felt that by his action, the story of Jesus would be useful at least to

reprehensible but also ultimately self-destructive. The apostles were not called to shape the Jesus story; it was theirs to faithfully report what they saw, heard, and touched.¹² In Soren Kierkegaard's helpful analogy, there was no "genius" to this work for genius is not a necessary qualification of an apostle.¹³ The true apostle's authority is found in the authority of his witness and not in himself; the true apostle loses his authority once he steps beyond his mandated witness to truth.¹⁴

What, therefore, is distinctive about the spiritual leadership of the apostolic band? What is it about their leadership that is informative and paradigmatic for church leadership today? In one word, it was *representative*. This is the key. Their leadership was symbolic and exemplary. The apostles first of all stood for something before they did anything. The apostles were representatives of what God – through Christ and by the Holy Spirit – was now doing for all people. As spiritual leaders they literally stood at the lead of God's gracious saving actions. They were the first to be impacted by Jesus, first to encounter his mercy and call, first to encounter his way into the Kingdom, first to be scandalized by his cross, first to witness his resurrection, first to receive his outpoured Spirit. What God was opening up for all people, God had done for them first. This was the nature of their leadership and this was the nature of their influence. All of their actions, both in word and deed, had little of human genius to it. Their words and deeds were supplied: God-centered, Christ-focused, Scripturally-informed, Spirit-empowered. One could marvel at the impact their leadership had on the masses. There is no doubt that the Twelve were hugely influential. The new Christian movement began with an influx of thousands and grew quickly and steadily beyond even that great number. Nevertheless, the growth of the church and the scope of its reach was never in their hands alone, and it was never because of their visionary foresight. Over and over, the apostles responded to what God initiated and revealed. The first Church leaders were simply witnesses of what was going on around them. They were not making anything happen; indeed they could not. Their only task was to be faithful to the assignment given them: to represent the story and continuing relevance of Christ.

Reflection:

Contemporary leadership literature seems to operate by anecdote. The literature is a record of stories exploring what works, what inspires, what mobilizes. In many ways it appears to be an apparent flowering of the only original American philosophy, pragmatism. Current leadership literature uses the human record of achievement to explain what it is that leaders do. It sees successful leadership as the mastery of the

him. Whether he believed he could force Jesus' hand into political action, or whether he was disappointed with the general direction of Jesus' concept of Kingdom is hard to determine for certain. But, in retrospect, we can see now that an apostle had no business in shaping the story, which Judas definitely tried to do.

¹² 1 John 1:1-2

¹³ Soren Kierkegaard. *Of the Difference Between A Genius and An Apostle*. (1847)

¹⁴ Peter is an example of the loss of authority when he acts in ways that contravene the gospel. Paul's correction of Peter, recorded in Galatians 2:11ff, is instructive in this regard. Paul opposed Peter's actions and not his person; it was his actions that betrayed his office and therefore needed correction and refutation.

leadership art. One well-known Christian writer on leadership sees successful leadership as the implementation of universal principles that anyone can use, for any purpose. He says: “I’ve learned from businesspeople, pastors, politicians, generals, ballplayers, entrepreneurs – you name it. No matter what the profession, the principles of leadership remain the same”.¹⁵ But is all leadership the same in nature? Did not Jesus model another way, a way that was more responsive to divine initiative than human will? And did not the apostles understand their task as leaders similarly? Spiritual leadership is not like every other kind of leadership. There are fundamental differences.

So, while leadership and spirituality are “in the air”, we as the church of Jesus must discern what is the true nature of spiritual leadership. In fact, many of the primary leadership gurus of the contemporary scene practice their trade from the perspective of a spiritual viewpoint, Christian or other. What is disappointing, and perhaps even corrupting, is that there is little perceived questioning of whether or not there is a distinctive difference to Biblical spiritual leadership.¹⁶ While much can be learned from leaders in other fields, one should ask what is it about spirituality and spiritual leadership that may be distinct, and therefore of a different nature from other human fields. Is spiritual leadership only a matter of following certain universal principles that “work”, or is spiritual leadership of another order? The contemporary ideal of leadership, which the church is all too easily imbibing, is focused on the methodology of moving people to follow the self-initiated vision of the leader.

The Biblical view, by contrast, is concerned with what God initiates. The Biblical view of leadership is more about objective reality than functional process. One contemporary leadership writer, Max Dupree, has said it well: “the first responsibility of a leader is to define reality”.¹⁷ Spiritual leadership is therefore in touch with the reality of what God is already doing: in the world, in others, and in oneself. Spiritual leadership announces what is already true but what is often unnoticed. Spiritual leadership is not about coming up with a new self-initiated vision. It is about seeing, living in, and announcing the things that God has already begun. Spiritual leaders never really start anything new. They enter a scene where there is a previous history and they leave when the story is not yet completed. Spiritual leaders live in the story that is bigger than any of us – the story of Christ, redemption, salvation, eternity, glory, judgment. Spiritual leadership is corrupted when it reduces its task to present visible activity; it is falsified when it elevates the genius of the leader; it is spiritually toxic when it forgets the initiative of God. By contrast, the work of spiritual leadership is to promote the vision of Christ: what he has done, what he is now doing, and what he will do to consummate the work of God in the world. In the story of Matthias’ election as replacement for Judas, we are reminded of the Biblical frame of reference when it comes to spiritual leadership. We

¹⁵ John C Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. Thomas Nelson: Nashville, 1998. p. 138

¹⁶ There is a growing awareness of the need to respond to the leadership literature from a Biblical-theological perspective. New works are emerging that respond to this present phenomenon.

¹⁷ Max Dupree. *Leadership is An Art*. Dell Publishing: New York, 1989. p. 11

are reminded that the ground and goal of spiritual leadership is the witness of Christ. The first Church leaders were representatives of the story of Jesus. That's how God used them to change the world.

An Afterthought:

After all that we have said, we need to be reminded of the grace under which spiritual leadership operates. It is possible to equate spiritual leadership to a standard which must be passed in the way the professions operate. One passes the "bar" of spiritual leadership by attaining some minimal level of qualification. But the real truth is that growth in spiritual leadership is always progressive. As Karl Barth said, we are forever learners, always children before the heavenly Father, always just learning the faith. We simply must live in the tension of this paradox, for the truth is that those in spiritual leadership are always in need of redemptive grace. Asserting the principle that leadership is representative does not mean that spiritual leadership is without the need for continuing development. Spiritual leadership is always in movement towards the Christ who has called us in grace. And just as grace is both a beginning and continuing principle, so the representative nature of spiritual leadership has both beginning and continuing aspects. Spiritual leadership thus begins as witness to the story of Christ, but it continues as the on-going transformation of life in Christ. Just as we are born again in order to live again, so we are called into spiritual leadership in order to grow into our calling. Our authentic qualification is that we are witnesses of the life that is in Christ; our need is to continually grow up into that life. Spiritual leadership is thus a life-long task and calling.

What I want to suggest as I close is that leadership-as-representative does not mean that spiritual leaders represents wholeness or perfection. Leaders, like teachers, are in it for the secret of their ambition. Teachers teach because they find that it is the best way to be a life-long learner; leaders lead because they know that to lead others in this gospel way is the best way to discover life-long transformation for oneself. Perhaps this was the lesson that Jesus taught Peter on that Galilean beach in the days between Easter and Pentecost. The call to "feed my sheep", repeated three times, is the call to the transformed life. For Peter, who denied Christ in his death, the call to take care of Christ's lambs was the life-long call to personal transformation.

Peter remains representative and symbolic for us, but in a different sense from the original determination of the twelve. As we follow his story, he becomes a symbol of life-long transformation, of mature correction, of grace that works through time. His witness of Christ, his life as a symbol of encounter with Jesus crucified and risen, did not mean that Peter somehow got his life and thinking right at every point. All we need to do is follow the story to see how this was so. Try these examples on for size:

1. The story of his call to the house of Cornelius in Acts 10. Peter is well-situated as lead apostle, Paul having only been recently introduced to the story.

Tremendous things have been happening in the new community of Jesus, things which Peter has experienced and participated in. And now a turning point comes in the story, a turning orchestrated by the Holy Spirit to which Peter is simply led along. It is the story of his opening to the Gentile mission. In prayer he sees a sheet with all kinds of non-kosher animals, an affront to his Jewishness, and a voice telling him to “eat”. This happens three times as it dawns on Peter that this is the Holy Spirit correcting his way of thinking and opening him up to the ministry that is now before him, a ministry to the Gentiles, persons he was not before open to. Peter’s practice of spirituality and prayer opened the way for him to be transformed in his perspective on people and the gospel.

2. The story of Peter’s confrontation with Paul in Galatians 2. This is how the text reads (Paul’s words): *“¹¹When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹²Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. ¹⁴When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”* This remains one of the most remarkable and seminal moments in NT history and shows Peter to be a life-long leader-in-development. The confrontation is stark and raw. It is public. It demonstrates that Peter has not yet completed his training in spiritual leadership. The great apostle must still be taught; he can act out of fear and cowardice, he can fail to see through to the essential issues, and he needs others to keep him right. The issue they are dealing with may seem alien to us and maybe this is why we are not as inspired as we should be by the way Peter responds to the moment. But let’s use our imagination. Peter responds (at least in time) magnificently! He affirms Paul’s teaching role in his second letter (2 Peter), saying there that his writing can be equated with Scripture, and giving Paul his due as apostle and teacher. This is a remarkable show of humility and deference. Peter’s role and function within the new church brought him into a confrontation with truth that transformed his way of seeing others and what the gospel really entailed.
3. The hints and admissions from Peter’s gospel and letters. It is fairly well accepted in scholarship that the gospel of Mark represents the preaching of Peter, recorded in the late 50’s or early 60’s towards the end of his life by crucifixion under Nero in 64 AD. If this analysis is true, this first gospel is an amazing summation of a life transformed by grace, a life that is wholly unpretentious and un-protective, a life willing to share its glories as well as its foibles. Peter is alternately the one who confesses Christ (who do men say that I am – you are the Christ!) and then struggles with the way of the cross and is

rebuked (get behind me Satan!). Peter is the one who declared his undying loyalty to Jesus and within a few hours denied he knew him. It is clear that the gospel of Mark portrays Peter to be a very human and conflicted life. But it also shows us that Peter's life is a life marked by grace; it shows us that in following his call into leadership he follows the way of transformation. Who would have guessed that this man would become the symbol for us that he is? Peter's life of service to Jesus allowed him to look back at his life's journey and reveal his humanity for what it was – flawed and transformed. And in this way he remains a symbol to us all. How many have connected with the story of Peter because of his many failures! How many have been inspired that he stayed in the way of grace and was transformed!

Getting our leadership models right means that we have to pay attention to the whole Biblical story, the story as it is lived from beginning to end. I want to finish this picture of spiritual leadership by reaffirming the entirety of Peter's life, not only the story of his transformation from rough and ragged bombast in the gospels, but his continuing and maturing story of correction through other more subtle and sophisticated theological issues, issues that came at the height of his stature in the church and his obvious leadership role in the new community of Jesus. Here Peter is representative for us in a different way: the symbol of a continuing transformation. Peter is the spiritual leader who, though well-formed, is never fully-formed. His humility inspires us; he is the "pope" who is anything but infallible. His leadership is instead one of symbolic representation of the life of transformation over time, learning Christ in ever deeper and clearer ways, holding not to his reputation and pride but seeking the glory that he once tasted on the mountain of transfiguration. Peter the bombastic fisherman became Peter the rock.