

GOSPEL PEARLS

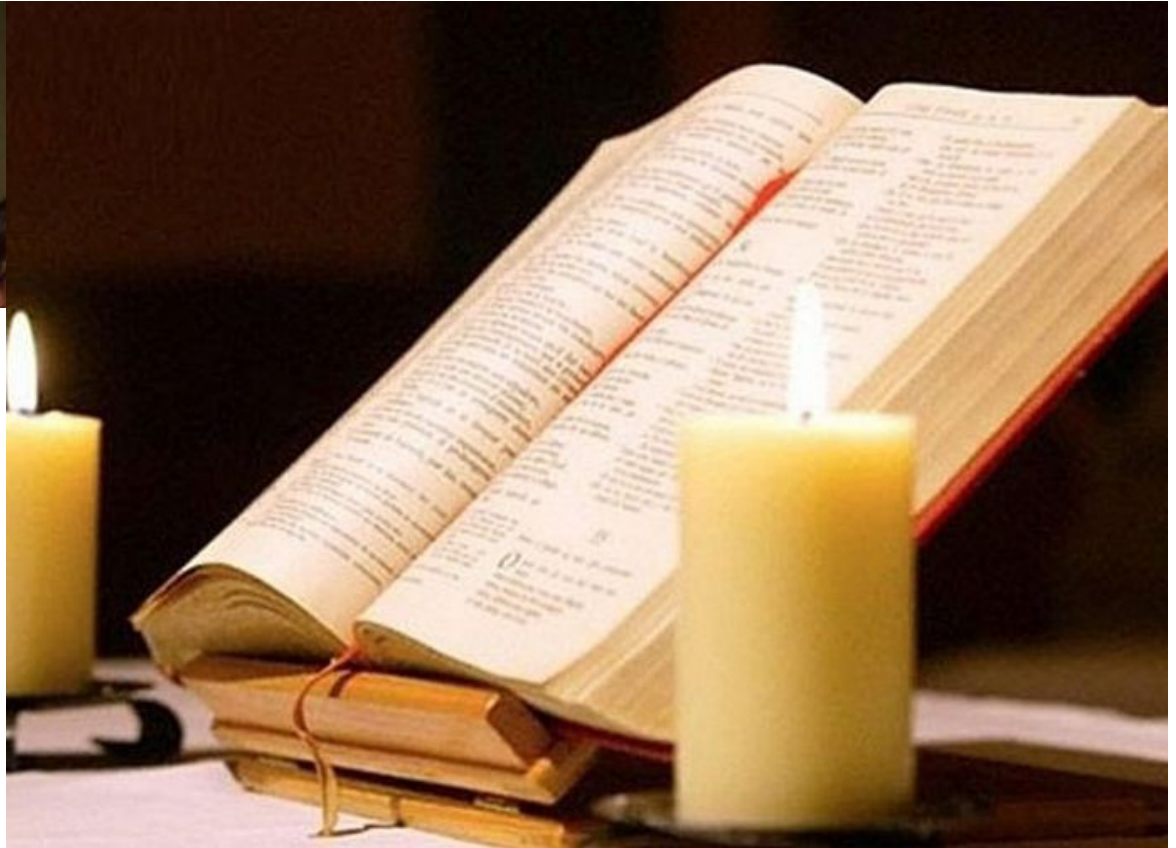
How much do you like the pope?

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When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But you," he said "who do you say I am?" Then Simon Peter spoke up, "You are the Christ," he said "the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I

will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16,13-19)

Peter expresses the profession of faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. For this reason the Lord names him the foundation of the Church. It gives Peter the extraordinary opportunity to make authoritative decisions on His behalf. This can happen because it is really Christ who is working through him. In fact, the Church belongs to the Lord and this is testified by the fact that he says "My Church" and not "your Church" or "the Church of Peter and his successors". The Church therefore is not Peter's, but of Christ. Do you think of the Church as your mother and teacher of the love of Jesus or, mistakenly, do you think that the love for the one Church of Christ should depend on how much you like this or that Pope?