

## Lesson 15 *By What Authority?*

### The Church's Teaching Authority

**Matthew 16:18-20; 28:18-20**

**Catechism: 85-95; 888-892**

**P**riestly celibacy, women's ordination, the death penalty, abortion—all were “hot” topics that Joe, a recent convert to Catholicism, had never thought much about. As he became more involved in the Church, however, Joe's interest in these issues grew. He decided to research the Church's positions on these and other controversial issues. The process took some time, but Joe was glad he made the effort. As he learned more about the Church's reasoning, he could better understand and appreciate its positions. Even when he struggled in some areas to understand the Church's stance, he realized that the Church's teaching authority was a gift that Catholics should view as a treasure and a source of wisdom in a confused world.

1. Discuss the people and events in your life that helped form your attitude toward authority.

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2. What do you think are the attitudes of many Catholics with regard to the teaching authority of the Church?

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3. How would you characterize the difference between a sincere search for truth and a search meant only to rationalize or justify a certain belief system?

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4. Describe the correlation between the authority given by Jesus to Peter and the other apostles in the Gospel of Matthew, and the authority described in the Catechism (88-95).

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5. How would you describe the duties and responsibilities of the Magisterium, or the teaching office, of the Church?

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6. How can a better understanding of the role of Magisterium throughout Church history help you grow in appreciation for this authority?

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7. How would you describe your own obedience and openness to the authority of the Church?

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## Action Plan:

This week I will examine my attitude toward the authority of the Church by:

- identifying Church teachings which I don't understand.
- studying Scripture, the Catechism, or other documents of the Church on those particular teachings.
- other:

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