I want to describe to you a young man. He isn’t particularly well educated. He’s impestuous. His heart is in the right place most of the time, but he often blurts out words without thinking and messes up. He has trouble loving people of all religions and ethnicity equally and in believing that God loves them, too. He bumbles around, bursting into situations when he should stay out of them. He has trouble sticking by his friends, especially if staying by them poses any risk to himself. He wants to do right but has trouble staying focused and sticking with it. His faith is all over the map.

This doesn’t sound much like a minister does it? Ministers are stable, educated, careful, right? Ministers have gifts, right?

The man I just described was Simon Peter, an uneducated fisherman. This Simon Peter interrupted a holy moment of Transfiguration to ask if he should build tents. He believed that the Gospel was only for the Jews. He initially refused to let Jesus wash his feet at the Last Supper. He started walking on water but lost his focus on Jesus and Jesus had to save him from drowning. He denied he even knew Jesus three times when the heat was on.

Peter, however, in his heart knows who Jesus is. He recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah. When he makes that declaration, Jesus renames him and equips him with the gifts he needs. Peter, whose faith is the basis upon which all of Christianity is founded is most definitely a minister.

We are all ministers, too. When we are baptized we -- or our parents -- declared that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. We received gifts. We are ministers. We may minister in a formal way, such as a Lay Eucharistic Minister, or a MOPS leader, or vestry member, or altar guild member, or buildings and grounds member. Whether or not we have a formal church ministry, we are all ministers because we are called to proclaim the love of God in all activities we do.

We all were given gifts that, when put together with other gifts, make up a functioning body of Christ in the world. God didn’t give us these gifts so we could be vain or proud of what we’ve done. God didn’t give them to us to ignore or to use purely for the secular world. God has given us these gifts because of what the church community and the local community would need.

Now that we have more context, I want to read a portion of the Romans passage to us again – this time from the Message translation of the Bible – an idiomatic translation.

**12 1-2**So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

**3**I’m speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it’s important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

**4-6**In this way, we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we’re talking about is Christ’s body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn’t amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren’t.

If you know Peter’s story, you know that after His encounter with the Risen Lord, he was transformed. Not all at once, but bit by bit, into the stable, trustworthy Rock Jesus knew he was. He used his gifts of leadership and preaching to spread the Gospel. This unlikely minister became the first leader of the church in Rome.

We also have encountered the Risen Lord. And we have gifts. Every gift is extraordinary – from the gift of knitting and gardening to the gift of communication and teaching and preaching. We are part of a community of faith and have gifts that complement those of others within our community. We are ministers.

We are the Rock. Not just Peter. Yes – we – you and me- are the Rock. We are the Rock that ministers to the world.