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Pope Francis raises his hand to wave while standing behind a clear lectern and a microphone

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Vatican City — June 29, 2023
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Like every saint, St. Peter was not a superhero, he was just a real, imperfect person who generously said, "yes" to Jesus, Pope Francis said.

"It appears that it is God who makes Peter strong with his grace, who unites us with his love, and forgives us with his mercy," the pope said June 29.

"It is with this true humanity that the Spirit forms the church. Peter and Paul were real people. And today, more than ever, we need real people," the pope said before praying the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter's Square on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, patron saints of Rome.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells the apostle Simon, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" (Mt 16:18). The name "Peter" has several meanings, the pope said;

"It can mean rock, stone or simply pebble," which also happen to reflect three different aspects of the saint's life.

"This is all in Peter: the strength of the rock, the reliability of the stone and the littleness of a simple pebble," Francis said.

"He is not a superman -- he is a man like us, who says 'yes' generously to Jesus in his imperfection," he said. But exactly that way in him -- just as in Paul and in all the saints -- it is God who provides strength with his grace.

Like a rock, Peter was often "strong and steady, genuine and generous," the pope said. He left everything to follow Jesus, he boldly and courageously proclaimed Jesus in the temple and he was "steadfastness when facing martyrdom, which happened right here."

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Like a stone, Peter was able to offer support to others for the building up of the church, he cared for those who suffered, he encouraged "the communal proclamation of the Gospel" and was "a reliable point of reference for the entire community," he said.

"But Peter is even simply a pebble: his littleness emerges often," Francis said. "At times he does not understand what Jesus is doing," he succumbs to fear when he denies Jesus when confronted with Jesus' arrest, then repents and weeps bitterly.

At different times he lacked courage, he hid in fear of being captured, he was embarrassed to be with converted pagans and tried to flee when faced with martyrdom, he said. But when he meets Jesus on the road, he "regains the courage to turn back."

Francis suggested the faithful "ask ourselves some questions starting from the rock, from the stone and from the pebble."

"Is there ardor, zeal, passion for the Lord and for the Gospel in us? Or is there something that easily crumbles?" he asked. "Are we stones, not the kind that make people stumble, but the kind with which the church can be constructed? Do we work for unity, are we interested in others, especially in the weakest?"

And finally, he asked, "Are we aware of our littleness" and weakness, trusting in the Lord "who accomplishes great things through those who are humble and sincere?"