...and I say to you, 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church...

MT 16:18

Pope John Paul condemned in the strongest words Communism and abortion and conservative Catholics loved him.

Pope Benedict thought Vatican II may have been mistnterpreted and started a "reform of the reform." restoring for some the Latin mass. In the meantime, Vatican scandals forced him into retirement.

Now Pope Francis critiques capitalism with a critical eye and tells us that social justice and concern for the poor are ALSO important concerns, and conservative Catholics mumble and wind bags like Rush Limbaugh rail against the pope.

And all three popes are successors of Saint Peter. Both in secular and in church history, pendulums swing. If one steps back and ruminates on the current papal pendulum, it would seem to me that Francis is going back to the gospel and focusing more on the immediate and voiced concerns of Jesus who announced in his first mission statement: "I have been sent to bring good news to the poor!"

IMAGES;

Tomas Halik writes about images stirring up and manipulating our inner fantasies. Thank God the beheading of Foley was NOT shown on CNN. If it had been shown, the fanatic savages would have had a great accomplishment to their satisfaction by impressing on our minds an image of horror.

Halik goes on to write: "This toying with images from deep inside is a kind of antimeditation wheras meditation is achieving freedom from images."

The modern mind has more images thrown at it than any minds in human history!

Meditation....time out....cease and desist....are spiritual respites than can restore our balance in this cascade of violent images.

RECENT FILMS AND IMAGES:

The Chief: lots of images of delicious food, and a light hearted ultimately happy plot.

IDA: a black and white captioned Polish film about a nun about to take final vows who discovers she is Jewish. A very reflective film that speaks to the heart both through image and silence. Commonweal magazine featured it with a cover story.

Calvary: a powerful film about the pain caused by the clergy sexual abuse scandal in Ireland. It climaxes with one horrific scene. If you cannot stomach another horrific image, don't go.

However the dedicated priest in the movie, fulfills a Christ like role who takes on the sins of abusers and sacrifices himself. It ends with a great image of forgiveness. It is thought provoking and profound.

Breakfast Question: What kind of images flood my consciousness?

Personal Reflection: Do I need to let go of images?