Church: Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Council Of Jerusalem

Throughout the history of the Catholic Church, there have been countless influencers that have benefited our lives today. Saint Paul, Saint Peter, and the Council of Jerusalem are just a small number, and they had, and continue to have vast effects on the Catholic Church. Saint Paul and Saint Peter have two different stories, but each found their own way to God. At one point, they both became extremely devoted to God, and they wanted to spread the message and the Word of God to others. The Council of Jerusalem was crucial to the church because of the tough and necessary decisions that were made. Each one played a vital role for the Catholic Church and everyone's faith, but I firmly believe Saint Paul impacted the church the most.

Saint Peter, originally named Simon, has been present since the beginning and is one of the spiritual followers of Jesus. He took on the role of being the "rock" of the church and never gave a reason to doubt that he was the true rock of the church. At a young age, he was a Jewish fisherman, who was born in Israel, and he was summoned to be a disciple of Jesus. What made him stand out, was after Jesus's tragic but worthy death, he was the first to perform a miracle and this occurred after Pentecost. The miracle he performed consisted of providing five loaves of bread and two fish that would feed around five hundred people. One of his greatest accomplishments in numerous eyes was when because of him, over three-thousand people were baptized. He was a devoted disciple due to his beliefs, prayer, communication with God, and his ability to spread the message to others who were confused about their faith. One way he demonstrated Christ's love was when he used the Old Testament to validate to everyone how Jesus Christ is the true Messiah and should be known for being the Son of God. He is most remembered for being one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus, and being the first pope, but also the successor to the pope. He displayed countless acts of reverence, he devoted his time to his faith, and demonstrated why he is so crucial for the Catholic Church.

Saint Paul, formerly known as Saul, has a polar opposite story than Saint Peter, but still affected the church greatly. Growing up, he was a Roman citizen and witnessed Christian persecutions quite often. Part of the time, he was the direct reason for the persecutions occurring and did not feel any regret or remorse. A life changing event occurred and impacted the rest of his life. One day Saul was on his way to Damascus and was blinded by the sun and was not able to see for three days. This encounter of Christ led him to being baptized by Ananias and also changing his name to Paul. From there on, he devoted himself to Christ and he deepened his knowledge and faith. This did not happen overnight, but it took practice, patience, and trust that his new faith would prevail in the end. He then began preaching and spreading the news and wrote over half of the New Testament letters that are heard today. These letters each had a specific purpose and were meant to offer: advice, praise, lessons, and love for God. Saint Paul's transformation is potentially regarded as one of the most important events in church history. This is a lesson that talks about good overcoming evil, and no matter what happened previously, God will always have love and will help even if someone seems lost and abandoned.

The Council of Jerusalem was the first church council and was designed to discuss and come up with solutions to questions or problems people might have. An example of this is when the leaders of the church discussed whether it was right or not to let the Gentiles into the church. A question like, "Would the Gentiles be required to first follow Jewish Law," raised questions and

debates between the leaders. The conclusion was that it was not mandatory to follow Jewish Law, but for them to keep an open mind and to consider basic regulations. One of the deciding factors the leaders looked upon was praying and asking for guidance for the solution. They thought about what God would want and how he would handle this. It eased their decision eventually allowing them to enter the Church. The belief that nothing will defeat the church and the Kingdom of God played a huge role and something the Apostles tried to share with others, and how God is accepting to all, not just a select few. Councils just like this one are still held in the present day and are necessary for making complex decisions. This demonstrates the idea that the church is open to all opinions and it is not based off of one person's beliefs or ideas.

I firmly believe Saint Paul had the greatest impact and demonstrated the true meaning of the Catholic faith and belief. Perfection is not necessary or encouraged, and Saint Paul is a great example of that. He turned his life around because of an encounter. This proved his faith countless times and he fully began to love himself and God. He allowed God to enter his life and change it for the better. He is the perfect example of a transformation and anyone is able to change. Praying or meditating are both great ways to speak to God and he loves everyone. He will never abandon you and will always help you through the toughest of times. Saint Paul is someone I look up to and others do as well, and he will continue to be a major influence for future generations.