



AMDG
SAINT PETER AND
SAINT PAUL, APOSTLES
YEAR A
28TH JUNE 2020



‘Who do you say I am?’

OPENING PRAYER

Grant, we pray, O Lord our God,
that we may be sustained
by the intercession of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul,
that, as through them you gave your Church
the foundations of her heavenly office,
so through them you may help her to eternal salvation.

Following Eastertide and several major feasts, we now celebrate Saints Peter and Paul before returning to the regular Sundays of Ordinary Time. We pray that their faith and example will encourage us at this time.

The *First Reading* gives us an account of how Peter escaped prison while the Christian community prayed continuously for him.

The *Psalms* is a song of praise and thankfulness for the psalmist’s own delivery, as he encourages us to ‘taste and see that the Lord is good.’

St Paul, too, in the *Second Reading*, is full of gratitude. He praises the Lord for rescuing him and enabling him to continue proclaiming God’s message.

The *Gospel* narrates the important moment when Jesus asks his disciples, ‘Who do people say I am?’ Peter’s reply earns his designation as leader of the community.

May the faith of Peter and Paul and their dedication to spreading Jesus’s message encourage us this week in our daily living.

SECOND READING 2 TIMOTHY 4: 6–8, 17–18

As for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his Appearing.

But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I come to my place of prayer and I place myself in God's presence, breathing in his goodness and life.

I allow other concerns to fade as I turn to my God.

I read the text slowly a couple of times. I consider Paul, a prisoner in Rome, looking over his life and preparing to meet his Lord.

As he considers his ministry, his heart is full of gratitude. He knows that what he has achieved has only been through the power of God.

Can I, too, look back and give thanks?

What in particular in my life gives rise to thankfulness?

I spend time speaking of this with my Lord.

Paul is also full of confidence – the Lord will rescue him and bring him safely to his kingdom. How do I understand this?

As I ponder on Paul's faith in the face of death, can I remember the Lord upholding me in times of stress, difficulty, doubt ...?

Perhaps here, too, I can give thanks.

Before I end my prayer, I think of those persecuted, whose faith is tested, and ask the Lord to be with them and console them.

I close with a slow '*Our Father*'.

GOSPEL MATTHEW 16: 13–19

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ ‘But you,’ he said, ‘who do you say I am?’

Then Simon Peter spoke up. ‘You are the Christ,’ he said, ‘the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So now I say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.’

As I prepare to spend time in prayer, I make a conscious effort to relax my body and my mind so as to be alert and receptive to God’s word.

I breathe slowly, perhaps asking for a special grace for today.

When ready, I take up the text and take time to read it slowly.

Perhaps I can imagine myself with Jesus and the disciples walking quietly, away from Galilee and the crowds. I listen to the disciples as they answer Jesus’s question.

What do I think of their replies?

And then Jesus asks me personally ‘*Who do you say I am?*’

The disciples fade away and I am left with Jesus. How do I feel?

Maybe I stay with him and tell him what he means to me.

I speak to him and then remain with him as I listen to his voice, or rest quietly in his presence.

How do Peter’s words help me?

I may wish to consider Jesus’s reply and then pray for his Church, for Peter’s successors, and for all leaders at this difficult time ...

I end my prayer in gratitude for all those in the service of leadership.

Glory be ...

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

I will bless the Lord at all times.

Psalm

I have kept the faith.

Second Reading

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!

Gospel

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church.

Gospel

This week's texts if you want to explore further:

Acts 12: 1–11; Psalm 33 (34); 2 Tim. 4: 6–8, 17–18; Matthew 16: 13–19



'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.'



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