

Two Great Luminaries of the Church

My Brothers and Sisters of the Risen Lord,

Where do we turn when life feels overwhelming? When we stumble under the weight of our weaknesses or fears, who gives us hope that God's grace can still accomplish something beautiful within us? Many turn to the lives of the saints, those flawed yet faithful individuals who show us that holiness is not born of perfection but of trust. Today, on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, we ask: Can the examples of these two great apostles still inspire us today?

The Church sets aside this solemnity to venerate Saints Peter and Paul together because they stand as twin pillars of the early Church, each playing a crucial role in establishing and spreading the faith. Though very different in temperament and mission—Peter the steadfast shepherd, Paul the fearless missionary—both ultimately gave their lives for Christ in Rome, sealing their witness with their blood.

Today's readings intertwine their stories beautifully. In the Acts of the Apostles, we hear how Peter, imprisoned by King Herod, is miraculously rescued by an angel. It is a vivid reminder that God's providence never abandons his Church, even when human powers seem overwhelming. Peter, flawed yet chosen, is sustained by divine grace. The second reading from the second letter to Timothy gives us Paul's voice near the end of his journey: "I, Paul, am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith." Paul, once a persecutor, now finishes his life in total fidelity to Christ. His words carry the deep peace of a soul that has lived fully the mission entrusted to him.

Finally, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus proclaims to Peter: "And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." This declaration makes clear that Peter's role is not based on his personal strength but on his faith and his openness to God's will. The Church rests not on human greatness but on divine grace working through human weakness.

The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul traces back to the early Church in Rome, celebrating these two great apostles who established Christianity's firm foundation. We honor them with a solemnity because they remind us that God builds his Church through ordinary people who become extraordinary by grace. We are only human, just like Peter and Paul. And look at what they were able to accomplish because they cooperated with God's grace. We, too, can allow God to transform our lives into a witness of his love.

It is this same trust in God that must also sustain us. Yes, the "Lord delivers his friends." This awareness must instill courage in us as we face the difficulties encountered in proclaiming the Gospel in daily life. May our holy patrons, Peter and Paul, sustain us and obtain for us that missionary zeal that made them witnesses of Christ to the ends of the then-known world. According to St. John Paul II, "They were able to overcome every trial because their trust was not based human resources but on the grace of the Lord, who, as the readings of today's solemnity recall, delivers his friends from every evil and saves them for his kingdom."

Pray for us, holy Apostles Peter and Paul, "pillars" of God's Church!

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rudy