

# *From the* **PASTOR'S** **DESK**



## **Firm in Faith**

Today's Solemnity brings together two giants of the early days of the Church. Two very different men. This joint celebration reminds us of the similarities of their endeavors. Both were headed on different paths toward the city of Rome, where the mission to all the nations would find its center. In that great imperial metropolis, the Apostolic tradition would bear fruit, and Peter and Paul, in different ways, would be united to Christ in deaths like his.

In Paul's conversion, a blinding vision provided him with such knowledge and zeal that nothing could stop him from moving through multiple communities on his way to Rome pouring pastoral care on his converts. Paul's mission is one of expansive evangelization, risky strategies, and the courage to believe that once conversion has happened in someone's heart, there is no doubt of the opportunity to return to God in moments of failure.

Peter, after making a profession of faith, is chosen as the rock and foundation of the Church. Peter seems like a weak man because he shows his flaws, doubts, and weaknesses. He tries to make sense of the teachings of the Lord and to alleviate the fears of the others. There is hurt and humiliation for Peter at the cross. He is disappointed in the Lord and in himself, and cries bitterly. He doesn't have the reckless adventures of Paul, but he stands firm and preaches the authenticity of the Gospel with unity and authority.

Both Peter and Paul were given miraculous experiences for the fulfillment of their missions: Peter is unlocked from prison; Paul is saved many times from shipwreck. Ultimately, the Lord does not save them from an ignominious death, like His. They share in it willingly - a short distance from each other.

If we are tempted to judge the weakness of Peter and the arrogance of Paul, we might want to reflect on our own moments of conversion and our own confessions of faith. It is we, ourselves, who choose to remain in darkness, and in doing this we bind ourselves and sometimes others to the darkness. Once we change our hearts and lift our minds, we are free to see God and to show Him to others. It is our duty to encourage one another to glory in the cross of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. To stand firm.

Fr. Hernan Cely

Pastor

