

## **Solemnity of Sts. Peter & Paul - 2025**

Peter was a fisherman who became the Rock on which Jesus built his Church; Paul was a tentmaker who became the Apostle whom Jesus sent to the Gentiles.

Peter denied the Lord, then he turned and strengthened his brothers; Paul persecuted the Church, the Body of Christ, but then turned and brought the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Both men experienced Christ, responded to him generously, and ultimately gave witness to him through their martyrdom in Rome: Peter was crucified upside down on the Vatican Hill; Paul was beheaded along the Via Ostiense.

Throughout the Gospels, from the lips of Jesus, we are often confronted with intriguing questions: "Who are you looking for? Do you love me? What do you want me to do for you?"

However, the most challenging of all questions is the one asked by Jesus in today's Gospel: "Who do you say that I am?"

- **Peter's response was, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."**
- **Paul's answer: "Jesus is Lord and Savior."**

The Christian Gospel preached by both Peter and Paul is about following the narrow path, it is making the least popular choices, it is carrying the cross, it is fighting (wrestling) against the flesh and its cravings, it is running from sin and towards God; it is living a life of deep connection with the Holy Spirit.

For both Peter and Paul, these responses were much more than mere lip service. They didn't just say the words; they put their convictions into action. They were men of passion— they were men on a mission, and their convictions eventually cost them their lives.

And like Peter and Paul, there will be many times when it will feel as though we are behind bars, prisoners of our shortcomings, our failures and weaknesses, our fears and doubts, and yes, even feeling weighed down by our own sin.

And we will wonder if we are making any difference at all.

It is precisely during these difficult times that we need to look to Peter and Paul and continue to be kind, show compassion, forgive, be generous, love, and deepen our desire to imitate our Lord and Savior.

Each time we come forward to receive Holy Communion, we respond with "Amen" to the statement, "The Body of Christ." "The Blood of Christ."

When we say "Amen" today, think about what you are saying. How does your faith carry over into your everyday life— at home or at work? How does your faith affect the way you make decisions? How does your faith influence the way you treat other people?

The answer you give to Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?" will mark out for you how to live as a Christian disciple.

- **If Jesus is my Teacher, then I am his disciple.**
- **If Jesus is my Savior, then I am a sinner in need of salvation.**
- **If Jesus is my Lord, then I am his servant.**

As we celebrate these two spiritual giants today, different in their human nature but one in the spirit of Christ, may we harness our natural differences in the one goal of spreading the gospel of Christ.

May we all be able to say with Paul at the last days of our lives on earth: 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith!