

**OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, MUMBLES**  
**Reflection for**  
**Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, June 28, 2020**  
**(May be used for Home Prayer Service)**  
**Dominican Friars, Swansea**

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*This reflection may be used during the home prayer service. Please see the home prayer service sheet for details.*

**PETER AND PAUL: THE PILLARS OF THE CHURCH**

Christ, by his divine will, has established his Church on the life witnessing of both Peter and Paul. They are referred to as the pillars of the Catholic Faith because Christ himself specially chose them and gave them the universal mandate of preaching his message to the ends of the earth. They were called to preach to different sets of people, but their only message was about the saving message of Christ the Lord. The Church celebrates their profound acts of witnessing in praise of Christ who has founded the Church on the faith of these two great apostles.

**The Church as Founded on Peter:** Peter was the first among the disciples of Jesus to publicly declare Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God (cf. Mt 16:16). This bold profession of faith made him stand out among the other disciples. However, Jesus made it clear that no one can make this profession of faith on mere human sentiment. Faith in Jesus Christ comes from God (cf. Mt 16:17; 1 Cor 12:3). After his profession of faith, Christ then gave Peter the primacy of place among the other disciples. The name, Peter, in Greek means stone or rock. It was on this Peter (the rock) that Jesus chose to establish his Church. This act of Jesus was a suggestion that the Church will continue to need a visible head. To the glory of God, the office of Peter has continued down the ages in the office of the Pope who continues to guide the Church to its final destination which is heaven.

Jesus knew all the human weaknesses of Peter but then went ahead to establish his Church on his profession of faith. Peter denied Jesus three times (cf. Lk 22:54-62) but the same man later knew the forgiveness of God. Peter who once denied Jesus declared himself as a sinful man in reparation for his incredulity (cf. Lk 5:8). Jesus forgave him and handed over his Church to him (cf. Jn 21:15-19). This is to indicate that the Pope, being human, is always in need of our prayer to remain faithful to Christ (cf. Lk 22:32).

**St Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles:** Paul was called by Christ in a very radical way. The call of St Paul required him to make a complete reversal from his old life. While Peter was specially sent to preach to the Jews, Paul was called to preach to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 22:21). It was through the preaching of Paul that many non-Jewish nations have come to know the message of Christ. We also remember Paul for his writings in the New Testament through which the message of Christ continues to reach ends of the earth.

**The Witness of Peter and Paul:** One of the major events that links the two apostles is that they were both martyred in Rome where the See of the Pope (the successor of Peter) is now situated. In dying in Rome, they both sought to unite both the Jews and the Gentiles under the guidance of the Pope. Their deaths in Rome are an expression of the universal outreach of the Gospel (Benedict XVI, Solemnity of Sts Peter And Paul, 29 June 2005). The message of Christ is to be taken to the ends of the earth through the preaching of these great apostles of Christ as the Lord himself instructed (cf. Mt 28:19-20). The two of them also knew the forgiveness of Christ. No matter how far we think we have strayed from God, he has the power to restore us back to his love. No offence of ours is greater than the mercy of God. We only need to trust in his great mercy as Peter and Paul did. As our ancestors in the faith, they have passed on the message of salvation to us. We also have the responsibility of passing the baton of our faith on to others.

More so, their preaching was characterised by persecution and difficulties of all kinds. However, God was always at hand to defend and protect them. God who protected and rescued Peter in the First Reading (Acts 12:1-11) can also rescue us from all the evils that threaten us. The God who stood by Paul to rescue him from all his terrors is always at hand to protect us. May the Lord stand by us in our daily challenges as we bear witness to him in the daily event of our lives. Amen.