

## **Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles**

**June 29, 2025**

### **Year of the Holy Spirit**

*“Simon Peter said in reply, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus said to him in reply, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.’” (Matthew 16:16-18)*

On this day we have the opportunity to remember and honor the two great saints and Apostles, Peter and Paul. I would like to reflect upon the statement of Jesus, found in Saint Matthew’s Gospel, concerning Peter. Jesus declares Peter to be the “Rock” upon which He will build His Church. We may ask: “Why Peter, when Saint John, whom He gave charge over His Mother while He hung upon the cross, may seem to be the more suitable option? I propose the answer to this question is found in one word—Faith.

We may define Faith as the firm conviction, arrived at with the grace of God, that all Jesus said, did and taught while on earth is true. We may add to this definition by further stating all that the Catholic Church teaches, both commissioned by Jesus to Peter and guided by the Holy Spirit, is also true. We believe Saint Peter, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, would pronounce Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Did Peter fully understand what he said? It would be safe to assume, he did not. Faith is a matter of both understanding and will. Its evidence is not solely to rest upon evidence gained through the senses. Our senses have the potential to mislead our perception of reality. Allow me to offer this example, a stick can be straight, but when part is placed in water, given the proper angle, our senses will perceive this same straight stick as appearing bent.

Saint Peter, a man of understanding, though, as Tradition teaches, not possessing a formal education, submits his will to the words and works of Jesus as being true. He has faith which surpasses his understanding. This is important to remember because the mysteries of God are above and beyond our understanding. Even though this is a completely accurate statement, Jesus establishes His Church to assist us in understanding the revelation of God. It is this same Church, built upon the profession of Faith authored by Saint Peter, the Rock, which reminds us the teachings offered by her are never opposed to human reason. They are believed because they are affirmed by our reason and based upon the truthfulness of Jesus.

I highlight this part of Saint Peter’s character, his belief in the honesty of Jesus, to remind all of our need to imitate Saint Peter in our lives. We must, like Saint Peter, humble ourselves to believe what has been provided to us by Jesus and His Church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus, during the Last Supper, holding up the bread said, “This is My Body;” Peter believed Jesus. He believed that Jesus, being the Son of God, would not lie. It would be considered a blasphemy to offer any other explanation which might hint of a deception. Our senses can

deceive us, but God cannot. He would cease to be God IF He, in just one single instance, lied. Like Peter, we are called to believe Jesus' Church would not teach or foster error.

I present all of this to you more as a consolation than teaching. We need be consoled that Jesus instructed Peter, Paul and the other Apostles of those things which would be necessary to believe for salvation. Likewise, Jesus would offer every Christian the opportunities for "Grace" which would solidify our faith in Him. Like Saint Peter, Saint Paul and early Christians, we are still required to believe those things which have been revealed through Sacred Scripture and Tradition. And, like so many before us, we too must commit our will to believe these revelations are coming from the mind of a truthful, loving God. Saints Peter and Paul are remembered as men of faith. They believed; therefore they lived faith-filled lives. And yes, they did not understand every single revelation of Jesus in their time, but we too do not understand every revelation even today. Our faith, like theirs, is a gift through the grace of God. Let us believe and therefore let us live.