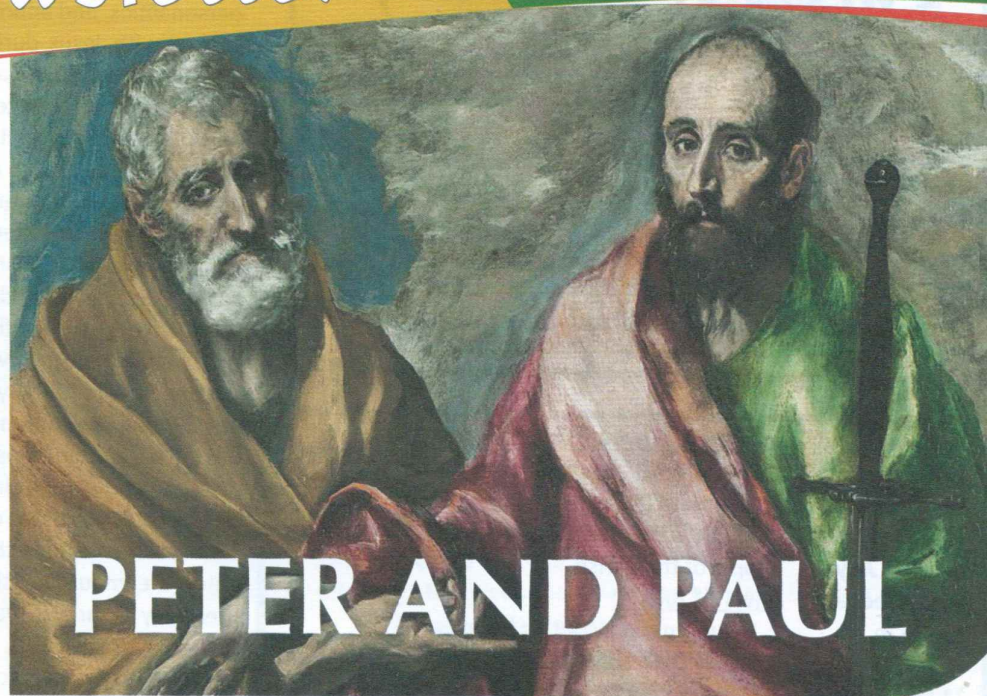


S s Peter and Paul were the unlikely foundation stones of Christianity. Peter was a fisherman, who lacked self-awareness and denied Jesus three times. Paul was an intelligent Jew who had been educated by Gamaliel and was devoted to persecuting Christians. Both of them experienced a life transforming spiritual awakening: Peter at Pentecost, and Paul on the road to Damascus. It was appropriate therefore that both of them had a symbolic name change: Simon to Peter and Saul to Paul.



In spite of their mutual respect, they didn't always agree with one another. For example, we are told that when Peter came to Antioch, St Paul opposed him to his face because of his cowardly behaviour. He tells us that Peter 'would not eat with the Gentiles, because he was afraid of those who were in favour of circumcising them' (Gal 2:12), even though he previously agreed that Gentile converts didn't need to be circumcised. In spite of their differences, they had great respect and love for one another. In 2 Peter 3:15-16, the leader of the Church wrote, 'our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, also wrote to you ... there are some things [in Paul's letters] which

are hard to understand that the ignorant and unstable distort to their own destruction, just as they do the other scriptures.'

The Romans of pagan times used to celebrate the foundation of the city by the brothers Romulus and Remus on 29th June. In the Christian era it was decided that the feast of Ss Peter and Paul, both of whom were martyred in the city of Rome, would be celebrated on this date. The two men, who courageously proclaimed the Gospel in the city, paid the ultimate price. Paul was beheaded in 65 AD and Peter was crucified upside down in 67, two years later. They were both declared to be the patrons of Rome.

St John Henry Newman wrote, 'Heavenly Father, grant, we pray, that Your Church may in all things follow the teaching of those through whom she received the beginnings of right religion. Grant that we may be sustained by the intercession of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul and that Your Church, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, which is Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.'

— Pat Collins

THE COMMUNION RITE

At the Saviour's command ...

Our Father, who art in heaven, ...

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, ...

**For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.**

Lord Jesus Christ, ...

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

As the priest breaks the consecrated Host the following is sung or said:

Lamb of God, you take away the sins ...

Behold the Lamb of God, ...

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Cf. Mt 16:16,18)

Peter said to Jesus:

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus replied: You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.

Prayer after Communion

Grant us, O Lord, who have been renewed by this Sacrament, so to live in the Church, that, persevering in the breaking of the Bread and in the teaching of the Apostles, we may be one heart and one soul, made steadfast in your love.

Through Christ our Lord

Amen.

Reflection

Are we allowing our strengths and weaknesses to serve as instruments through which God helps others?

Lesson

We don't need to be perfect for God to work through us; He can work through our flaws, just as He did with Peter and Paul.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, send the Holy Spirit upon us so that we become more faithful witnesses to the truth of the Gospel.