



TWO GOOD MEN

(MATTHEW 16:13-19)

A sculpture in St Peter's Basilica, Rome, of Christ enthroned with St Paul, St Peter and Pope Pius VIII

Jesus has been going around curing sick people and performing miracles, with the result that he has become quite a celebrity. But he has also become a target, and those in authority are out to get him. They are trying to turn public opinion against him, and things are hotting up.

Jesus asks his disciples to be honest with him. He wants to know what people are saying about him. His friends are nervous and embarrassed. They fudge the issue and tell him only the good things.

Well, they begin, some say you are John the Baptist. Others say you are Elijah, while others think you're Jeremiah or one of the other great prophets.

But Jesus doesn't want flattery. He stops them in their tracks: "What about you?" he says, "Who do you say that I am?"

While the others stop to think about what they're going to say, Peter, impetuous as always, rushes forth with the winning answer. For him, Jesus is no mere prophet or returned figure from the past. He is the Messiah, God's own Son, the one whose coming the scriptures had foretold.

For the first time, it seems the disciples are beginning to recognise who Jesus really is. Then events take an unexpected turn, which no doubt leaves Peter dumbstruck and confused.

Jesus blesses Peter for his answer, and gives him authority in the community. Peter will be the unshakeable rock upon which Christ will build his Church, and will hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Peter, and later Paul, knew that Jesus was their Lord and Saviour. They spent their lives after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus preaching that Good News, building up the early Church. Both shared a martyr's death. Both were instrumental in laying the foundations for the Church we have today.

That is why we honour them with today's feast. Like Peter and Paul, we know who Jesus is and we too are called to make him known as best we can. ■

REFLECT

Because we are human, we make mistakes, we screw up, we disappoint ourselves and others. Whether it's on the sports field, or in the workplace, or in a relationship, we can let others down. We don't always show our potential.

And so we know how important it is to be given a second chance, another opportunity, to be able to start all over again. To be offered the possibility of redemption.

Peter and Paul both knew and experienced that. Both were weak characters, who made big mistakes. Peter denied Jesus three times; Paul actively persecuted members of the early Christian community. Both were most unlikely candidates to lead the Church, yet God chose both of them. God overlooked their weakness and past failures because God saw the extraordinary potential in the two of them.

In God's eyes, there are no lost causes, no hopeless cases. God sees the potential in everyone. God sees the potential in each one of us also, and as God did with Peter and Paul, invites us to be our best selves. ■



SAY

"Lord, I know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

LEARN

God sees the potential in everyone.

Each of us is called to build up the community of faith.

DO

Though leaders of the Church, Peter and Paul were both very conscious of their faults and failings. They knew they were far from perfect. Think about your life. What are your failings? What do you need to do to be closer to God?

PRAY

Ask the Lord to help you always to know who he is and to witness to him to the best of your ability, following the example of Peter and Paul.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

These are the ones who, living in the flesh,
planted the Church with their blood;
they drank the chalice of the Lord
and became the friends of God.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who on the Solemnity of the Apostles
Peter and Paul
give us the noble and holy joy of this day,
grant, we pray, that your Church
may in all things follow the teaching
of those through whom she received
the beginnings of right religion.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 12:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
King Herod started persecuting certain
members of the Church. He beheaded James
the brother of John, and when he saw that
this pleased the Jews, he decided to arrest
Peter as well. This was during the days
of Unleavened Bread, and he put Peter in
prison, assigning four squads of four soldiers
each to guard him in turns. Herod meant to
try Peter in public after the end of Passover
week. All the time Peter was under guard the
Church prayed to God for him unremittently.
On the night before Herod was to try him,
Peter was sleeping between two soldiers,
fastened with double chains, while guards
kept watch at the main entrance to the prison.
Then suddenly the angel of the Lord stood
there, and the cell was filled with light. He
tapped Peter on the side and woke him. "Get
up!" he said "Hurry!" – and the chains fell
from his hands. The angel then said, "Put on
your belt and sandals." After he had done
this, the angel next said, "Wrap your cloak
around you and follow me." Peter followed
him, but had no idea that what the angel did
was happening in reality; he thought he was
seeing a vision. They passed through two
guard posts one after the other, and reached
the iron gate leading to the city. This opened
of its own accord; they went through it and
had walked the whole length of one street
when suddenly the angel left him. It was only
then that Peter came to himself. "Now I know
it is all true," he said. "The Lord really did

send his angel and has saved me from Herod
and from all that the Jewish people were so
certain would happen to me. "

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 33

Response:

From all my terrors the Lord set me free.

or

The angel of the Lord rescues those who
revere him.

1. I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad. (R.)
2. Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free. (R.)
3. Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
This poor man called; the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress. (R.)
4. The angel of the Lord is encamped
around those who revere him, to rescue
them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He is happy who seeks refuge in him. (R.)

SECOND READING 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to
Timothy.

My life is already being poured away as a
libation, and the time has come for me to
be gone. I have fought the good fight to the
end; I have run the race to the finish; I have
kept the faith; all there is to come now is the
crown of righteousness reserved for me,
which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give
to me on that Day; and not only to me but all
those who have longed for his Appearing.

The Lord stood by me and gave power, so
that through me the whole message might
be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and,
so I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The
Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts
on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly
kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my
Church.

And the gates of the underworld can never
hold out against it.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 16: 13-19

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea
Philippi he put this question to his disciples,
"Who do people say the Son of Man is?" And
they said, "Some say he is John the Baptist,
some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of
the prophets." "But you," he said, "who do
you say I am?" Then Simon Peter spoke up,
"You are the Christ," he said, "the Son of the
living God." Jesus replied, "Simon son of
Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was

not flesh and blood that revealed this to you
but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you:
You are Peter and on this rock I will build my
Church. And the gates of the underworld can
never hold out against it. I will give you the
keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you
bind on earth shall be considered bound in
heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be
considered loosed in heaven.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the prayer of the Apostles, O Lord,
accompany the sacrificial gift
that we present to your name for consecration,
and may their intercession make us devoted
to you
in celebration of the sacrifice.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

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,
and made steadfast in your love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.