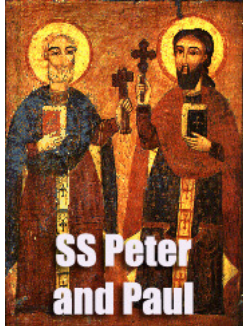


# THE WORD OF THE LORD Year B

Matthew 16:13-19



13 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?' 14 And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 15 'But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?' 16 Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' 17 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. 18 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. 19 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.' ,

Other readings: Acts 12:1-11 Psalm 33 (34) 2 Timothy 4:6-8,17-18

On this day we celebrate the feast of the two great apostles, Peter and Paul. One was with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry and accompanied him until the end. His faith was sorely tested by seeing his Messiah suffer. The life of the other was dramatically changed by an encounter with the Risen Jesus. From persecuting Christians he became a preacher of the faith.

The gospels provide many stories about St Peter, which might have been chosen for today's feast. The reading from the Gospel of Matthew tells of Peter's faith in Jesus as the Messiah. His declaration of faith leads to his commissioning by Jesus. Despite the trials he will face, Peter's faith endures.

Our second reading reminds us that St Paul spent his life travelling and proclaiming the gospel beyond the confines of Judaism. He 'fought the good fight' to the end. While Peter is commonly recalled as the one who preached to the people of Israel, Paul is revered as the 'apostle of the gentiles'. In fact both of them preached to both Jew and Gentile.

The heart of Paul's message, the heart of his gospel, is that we are saved by our faith in Christ. This faith was already expressed by Peter as he accompanied Jesus in his ministry. The same faith is what Paul came to know by a 'revelation' of the Risen Jesus. Christ's disciples today have come to know the good news because people like Peter and Paul were brave enough to give their lives for it and to proclaim it to the whole world.

*What does the faith of Peter in the gospel reading teach me?*

*How does the faithful witness of Paul inspire me to spread the good news?*

*We thank God for all the martyrs who gave, and still give, their lives for the gospel.*

*We pray for those who have lost sight of Jesus amid the problems and distractions of life.*