

SUNDAY *Plus*

Ss Peter and Paul, Apostles **Divine Office Week I** Year C

You are Peter...



In the Gospel for today, the solemnity of the holy apostles, Ss Peter and Paul, Jesus says to Simon, one of the Twelve: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church". Peter is a name that has several meanings: it can mean rock, stone, or simply, pebble. And, in fact, if we look at Peter's life, we discover a bit of all three of these aspects of his name...

This is all in Peter: the strength of the rock, the reliability of the stone and the littleness of a simple pebble. He is not a superman — he is a human being like us, like every one of us, who, in his imperfection, generously says "yes" to Jesus... And it is with this true humanity that the Spirit forms the Church. Peter and Paul were real people. And today, more than ever, we

need real people.

Now, let us take a look inside ourselves and ask ourselves some questions starting from the rock, from the stone and from the pebble. From the rock: is there ardour, zeal, passion for the Lord and for the Gospel in us? Or is there something that easily crumbles? And then, are we stones, not stumbling blocks, but building blocks for the Church? Do we work for unity, are we concerned for others, especially the weakest? Finally, thinking of the pebble: Are we aware of our littleness? And above all, in our weaknesses, do we entrust ourselves to the Lord who accomplishes great things through those who are humble and sincere?

Pope Francis

Even the crows?

By Mary Bell

Having promised the previous owners of our house that we would "look after the birds", we bought a birdfeeder. A new, delightful world opened up for us: rainbow-coloured wings; the charm of watching a family of coal tits as the adults fed the small, fat youngsters on a nearby tamarisk tree.

However, before long, the local crows sussed out that there were easy pickings to be had and in no time columns of birdseed

"disappeared" within twenty-four hours of being filled.

The answer was to invest in a birdfeeder with apertures too small for the crows. Problem solved!

But then remorse set in. Were the jackdaws and rooks not also worthy of being fed? This led me to reflect that the situation that confronted Peter and Paul was not dissimilar: to spread Jesus' words to both Jews and Gentiles. All were hungry for the Good News.

Regardless of the differences and intolerance between the two groups, Jesus wanted all to be fed with his message of love.

Following many years in the classroom and as Head of RE, retired teacher Mary Bell now has time to enjoy the beauty of the natural world around her.

Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

Practise patience

Saint Paul is a realist. He knows that life has its joys and sorrows, that love is tested amid trials, and that hope can falter in the face of suffering. Even so, he can write: "We boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope". For the Apostle, trials and tribulations mark the lives of those who preach the Gospel amid incomprehension and persecution. Yet in those very contexts, beyond the darkness we glimpse a light: we come to realise that evangelisation is sustained by the power flowing from Christ's cross and resurrection. In this way, we learn to practise a virtue closely linked to hope, namely patience.

Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of Jubilee Year of Hope

READINGS

Today:
Acts 12:1-11
2 Timothy 4:6-8. 17-18
Matthew 16:13-19

Monday:
Genesis 18:16-33
Matthew 8:18-22

Tuesday:
Genesis 19:15-29
Matthew 8:23-27


Wednesday:
Genesis 21:5. 8-20a
Matthew 8:28-34

Thursday:
Ephesians 2:19-22
John 20:24-29

Friday:
Genesis 23:1-4. 19;
24:1-8. 62-67
Matthew 9:9-13

Saturday:
Genesis 27:1-5. 15-29
Matthew 9:14-17

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 66:10-14c
Galatians 6:14-18
Luke 10:1-12. 17-20

Lord, grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by you, always follow your plans, and perfectly accomplish your holy Will. Grant that in all things, great and small, today and all the days of my life, I may do whatever you require of me.  Amen.

St Teresa of Avila

