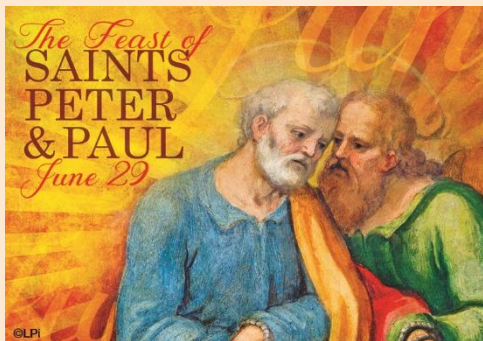




From the Desk of Father Peter

Sts Peter & Paul—Commitment to Christ and Our Faith in the Lord

*If you have been to Rome, the excavations under St Peter's Basilica are one of the most interesting parts of any visit to the Holy City. As you enter the long passageways directly under the basilica, you descend down through several layers of history until you finally arrive at what is usually referred to as the Necropolis or the City of the Dead. Passing through its narrow damp and dark streets, you finally come to a small cavity there, and scratched on the stone in Latin are the words: **Here is Peter**. Here, according to tradition, Peter, the fisherman and prince of the Apostles is laid to rest.*



Peter is mentioned more than any other apostle in the Gospels. We hear again that the significance of Peter is made clear as he is declared the Rock upon which the Christian community will be built and he is entrusted the keys to the kingdom of heaven. We know the character of Peter, impulsive, the one who speaks first and thinks later; the one who despite all his bravado ends up denying Jesus three times and finally deserting him at the time of great need.

Contrast is the word that comes to mind when we think and reflect on the lives of the two saints we celebrate this week. Paul was once called Saul, the zealous Pharisee who persecuted the early Church,

seeking to silence the spread of the Gospel message. Yet, God used him; by his conversion he became the fearless preacher of the Gospel. Paul tells us in his letters to the various Christian communities about how the Lord has been by his side, giving him strength to complete the task of preaching the Gospel. He has faith that the Lord will rescue him from all harm and bring him safely into the heavenly abode.

Discipleship of Jesus Christ takes on many forms. Many times, we limit our vision of discipleship to the work of priests and nuns or the obviously involved lay men and women of the Church. But each and every disciple of Jesus Christ is formed and supported by a network of others who are also disciples. It is by the work and sacrifice of all of them, based upon their deep love for Christ, that the Gospel message of Jesus is preached, lived out, and expanded around the world.

Each of us is called to be a disciple of encouraging words. Each of us is called to be a disciple of prayer. Each of us is called to be a disciple of charity, willfully giving of our time, talent, and treasure to the support of the Church. Each of us is called to be a disciple of welcome to the people who come to us, who are sent by God to lead, challenge, and call the world to himself. It is by our work and support that we, ourselves, are active and vibrant disciples.

By acknowledging Peter and Paul in this solemn feast, we are recognizing our roots in the Christian Church, and we remain connected to them. Through the centuries, the Catholic faith has spread and evangelized people through all parts of the world. Each of us has a part to play in evangelization. It is through our own personal discernment and prayer that we come to know just what

our role is to be. You may be surprised at the variety of ways we can share the Lord with our St John's faith community. Evangelization continues through our own kind words and actions. There is much to be done, so waste no time in getting started.



Peace and love to all,

Fr. Peter