

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jun 29th 2017**

### **Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles**

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul. As I reflected on our readings and what I know about these two biblical men I heard loud and clear how they are examples to us of how we can trust and have faith in God.

I want to start with Paul and our reading from Second Timothy. The phrase that got my attention is “the Lord stood by me and gave me strength.” And later, “The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat. . .” I considered Paul’s journey and how almost immediately he trusted the Lord. When he was struck down and heard the voice of Jesus he allowed himself to be guided to the city and there he waited for what would come next. He trusted and experienced the Lord standing by him on his journeys and now as he looked toward martyrdom, he trusted the Lord to rescue him, not literally from bodily death, but to the safety of union with God. The question that surfaced in my prayer was, Do I trust this much?

Turning to Peter, in our first reading we hear the story of how Peter is freed from prison by an angel. A couple things struck me here. First, Peter must have been fairly relaxed or unconcerned to be able to sleep so deeply that he was not fully awake until he was outside the city gates. That speaks to me of his trust that things would be alright. Secondly, his proclamation at the end of the passage “Now I know for certain that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod and from all that the Jewish people had been expecting.” His experience bolstered his faith and trust.

When I prayed with this I considered, what is binding me, how am I imprisoned? Do I trust that the Lord will free me?

We hear more about Peter in the Gospel reading from Matthew. We hear how he was gifted with the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ. This and my reflection got me thinking about Peter’s life and the trust and faith he had in Jesus. At the outset, Peter “dropped his nets and followed.” Peter got out of the boat. Peter returned to the community (and Jesus) after he denied Jesus at his death. He trusted he would be accepted back and forgiven. Peter wasn’t perfect but I believe he had a deep faith and trust in Jesus.

Peter and Paul both had faith not just that Jesus was the Christ or that he would rescue them from bodily danger or pain. But more importantly that Jesus and his Father would always be there with them, in the prison cell, when they are blind, when they are sinking, struggling, dying. This is the message I hear from these readings and the examples of Peter and Paul.

Today, let us remember their lives and pray and consider:

Can I trust this much?

What is binding me?

How am I imprisoned?

Do I have faith in the presence of God with me and that I will be freed?

Saints Peter and Paul, pray for us.

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