

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Jun 29th 2024

Christ, the Living stone.

The solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul invites us to rediscover our missionary zeal in bringing Christ to people. Peter and Paul might seem like an unusual duo to share the same feast day! Peter, a fisherman, was the first to respond to Jesus' call, while Paul, a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians, was called later to be an apostle. Both of them underwent a significant change of heart and conversion.

Simon had a great love for Jesus, but in a moment of weakness, he denied the master three times. However, he was chosen to be the leader of the apostles. Similarly, the passionate Saul, who once tried to destroy Christ's followers, was chosen to become Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

In Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asks his disciples two questions: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" and "Who do you say that I am?" The initial question elicited straightforward responses: the public regarded him as a notable historical figure - either John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the ancient prophets (vv. 13-14). However, Jesus remained unmoved by people's admiration.

Peter's response to the second question, was his profession of faith in the Lord - "You are the Messiah!" Jesus recognized Peter's strong faith, comparing it to the strength of stones used in construction. In Aramaic, "Cephas" refers to construction stones. Jesus would use the faith of the disciples as the stones to build his Church. And the solid, immovable "rock" on which this Church is built is Christ himself.

The Apostles are given the keys and the authority of binding and loosing. The analogy of 'keys' was used by Rabbis to refer to the authority to interpret the Torah, which belonged to Scribes and teachers of the Law. Jesus now empowers Peter and the apostles to unlock the scriptures. They are now tasked with revealing the true face of God to humanity through the scriptures. Jesus entrusts Peter with the responsibility of opening wide the entrances to the Gospel of Christ for all.

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