

JUNE 29, 2020  
Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, Apostles  
Matthew 16: 13-19

“I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.”

Today’s Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles are widely and popularly commemorated in many parts of the world and the Eastern and Western Churches. Tradition declares that both were martyred in Rome in the first century. As apostles, they diligently and faithfully spread the gospel to all peoples and nations not only to the people of Israel. They offered their lives and their blood to their Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. Both of them, as indicated in our second reading, “fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith”<sup>1</sup>

My brothers and sisters, it is not easy to keep one’s faith. We need God’s grace as St. Paul said: “The Lord stood by me and gave me strength.”<sup>2</sup> It is not through our own effort that we won the battle but it is with the Lord’s power that we fought the good fight, finished the race and keep the faith. With Jesus’ help and abiding presence, we can be faithful to Him. Our faithfulness, love, and obedience will be the way towards salvation. Let us imitate Saints Peter and Paul in their untiring obedience and love to Jesus even if along the way they failed, abandoned, and denied their Master, our Lord Jesus Christ.

“There is a traditional story about Peter’s death in Rome during the persecution of Nero. When he heard about Nero’s plan to burn the city and blame the Christians, Peter knew that as the church leader in the city he would be arrested and put to death. So, urged by his friends he did the sensible thing and got ready to leave town at night along the Appian Way. As the night wore on the sky was illuminated by the flames rising from the city. Then Peter saw someone coming in the opposite direction, heading back towards the city, someone who even at night seemed familiar. “Where are you going, Lord?” (Quo

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 4: 7 NRSV Catholic Bible Press

<sup>2</sup> 2 Timothy 4: 17 NRSV Catholic Bible Press

vadis, Domine?), asked the bewildered Peter. “To Rome,” was the reply, “to be crucified again, in your place;” and on hearing this, Peter turned around and returned to Rome.<sup>3</sup>

My dear brothers and sisters, are we willing to give our lives for Christ? Do we tirelessly and faithfully follow the Lord even unto death? Let us ask the intercession of Saints Peter and Paul that we may love, obey, and serve the Lord today and always. Saints Peter and Paul pray for us.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie](http://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie)