



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Thursday, 29 June 2017*

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning!

The Fathers of the Church loved to compare the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul to two pillars on which the Church constructed her visible edifice. Both of them sealed with their own blood their witness to Christ by preaching and serving the fledgling Christian community. This testimony is highlighted in the biblical readings of today's liturgy; readings which explain the reason why their faith, which had been professed and proclaimed, was crowned with the supreme trial of martyrdom.

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles (cf. 12:1-11) recounts the events of the imprisonment and subsequent *liberation* of Peter. He had previously experienced aversion to the Gospel in Jerusalem, where he had been imprisoned by King Herod, "intending ... to bring him out to make him suffer, before the people" (cf. v. 4). But he was miraculously saved and so was able to complete his evangelizing mission, firstly in the Holy Land and then in Rome, putting all of his energy at the service of the Christian Community.

Paul too experienced hostility from which he was *liberated* by the Lord. Sent out by the Risen One to many of the pagan peoples' cities, he encountered strong resistance, both from his coreligionists and from the civil authorities. In writing to the disciple Timothy, he reflects on his life and on his own missionary journey, as well as on the persecution suffered for the sake of the Gospel.

These two “*liberations*” of Peter and Paul reveal the shared journey of the two Apostles, who were sent out by Jesus to proclaim the Gospel in difficult and in some cases hostile environments. Through their personal and ecclesial experiences, they both demonstrate and tell us today that the Lord is always by our side; he walks with us; he never abandons us. Especially at the moment of trial, God reaches out his hand, comes to our aid and frees us from enemy threats. But let us recall that our true enemy is sin and the Evil One who drives us to it. When we reconcile ourselves to God especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, receiving the grace of forgiveness, we are liberated from the restraints of evil and unburdened of the weight of our failings. Thus, in this way, we can continue our journey as joyful proclaimers and witnesses of the Gospel, showing that we first received mercy.

Let us address to the Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles, our prayers which today are above all for the Church that lives in Rome and for this City, of which Peter and Paul are Patrons. May they obtain from her spiritual and material wellbeing. May the goodness and grace of the Lord support all the People of Rome so that all may live in fraternity and harmony, making the Christian Faith shine, as witnessed with intrepid ardour by the Apostle Saints Peter and Paul.

After greeting the Cardinals and Metropolitan Archbishops who had participated at Mass, the Pope addressed the faithful present:

Dear brothers and sisters, this morning here in the Square, I celebrated the Eucharist with the five Cardinals whom I created in yesterday’s Consistory, and I blessed the Palliums of the Metropolitan Archbishops appointed this year from different countries. I renew my greeting and my good wishes to them and to those who have accompanied them on this pilgrimage. I encourage them to joyfully carry out their mission at the service of the Gospel, in communion with the entire Church. At the same celebration, I welcomed with affection the Members of the Delegation which came to Rome in the name of the Ecumenical Patriarch, my very dear brother Bartholomew. This presence is also a sign of the brotherly bonds that exist between our Churches.

I extend a cordial greeting to all of you, families, parish groups, associations and individual faithful from Italy and from many parts of the world, especially from Germany, England, Bolivia, Indonesia and Qatar. I greet the students of the Catholic Schools of Salbris (France), Osijek (Croatia) and London.

My greeting today goes above all to you, faithful of Rome on the feast of the Patron Saints of this City! To all the faithful of Rome, a big round of applause! On this occasion, the Roman “Pro Loco” has sponsored the traditional flower display arranged by various artists and volunteers from the Civil Service. Thank you for this initiative and for the beautiful floral presentations. And I would also like to recall the fireworks display that will take place in *Piazza del Popolo* this evening.

I wish all of you a happy celebration. And please do not forget to pray for me.

Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*

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