

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) These are the ones who, living in the flesh, planted the Church with their blood; they drank the chalice of the Lord and became the friends of God.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 33)

ANTIPHON: The Lord set me free from all my fears.

RESPONSE: **The Lord set me free from all my fears.**

**LECTOR:** I will bless the Lord at all times his praise always on my lips; in the Lord my soul shall make its boast. The humble shall hear and be glad. **R.**

**LECTOR:** Glorify the Lord with me. Together let us praise his name. I sought the Lord and he answered me; from all my terrors he set me free. **R.**

**LECTOR:** Look towards him and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed. This poor man called; the Lord heard him and rescued him from all his distress. **R.**

**LECTOR:** The angel of the Lord is encamped around those who revere him, to rescue them. Taste and see that the Lord is good. He is happy who seeks refuge in him. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! You are Peter, the rock on which I will build my Church; the gates of hell will not hold out against it. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) Peter said to Jesus: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus replied: You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.

**TODAY'S READINGS** Acts of the Apostles 12:1-11; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18; Matthew 16:13-19

**NEXT WEEK** (14th Sunday, Year C): Is 66:10-14; Ps 65; Gal 6:14-18; Lk 10:1-12, 17-20

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## Our early Church martyrs



**El Greco circa 1595**

**29 June 2025 Saints Peter and Paul Year C**

In this week's gospel reading (Matthew 16:13), Jesus asks His disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?". The disciples offer various answers, including that some believe Jesus to be John the Baptist, Elijah, or Jeremiah.

However, when Jesus presses further, asking, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?", it is Simon Peter who responds emphatically, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

This confession of faith is a pivotal moment in the gospels. Peter, inspired by divine revelation, recognises Jesus not just as a prophet but as the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of God.

Jesus' response to Peter's declaration is both affirming and momentous. He tells Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven." Jesus then declares that Peter is the rock upon which He will build His Church: "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

The name "Peter" itself comes from the Greek word *petros*, meaning "rock," which establishes a direct connection to Jesus' words.

The passage continues with Jesus giving Peter the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," granting him authority to bind and loose on earth, as it will be in heaven. This confers a unique leadership role on Peter in the early Church, establishing his primacy and special role among the apostles.

The roles of Saints Peter and Paul in the early Church are central to understanding the growth and spread of Christianity. Both apostles are

foundational figures, each contributing uniquely to the establishment of Christian teaching and community.

Peter is often considered the first pope of the Roman Catholic Church, based on the belief that Jesus entrusted him with the authority to lead His Church. Peter's leadership and his martyrdom in Rome further solidify his position as a central figure in Christian tradition.

Peter's role as the rock upon which the Church is built signifies stability, continuity, and faithfulness in Christ's mission. The Church sees Peter's authority, symbolised by the keys of the kingdom, as essential in guiding the faithful and preserving the integrity of Christian teaching.

While Peter was the leader of the early Church, Paul was the great missionary who brought Christianity to the Gentiles. He too was martyred.

Paul's letters (Epistles) form a significant portion of the New Testament, shaping Christian doctrine, ethics, and theology. His conversion from Saul, a persecutor of Christians, to Paul, an ardent missionary, serves as a powerful testimony to the transformative power of Christ. Paul's deep theological insights, especially concerning grace, salvation, and the nature of the Church, made him instrumental in spreading Christianity beyond its Jewish roots.

Though Peter and Paul had different missions, their combined efforts were crucial to the growth and establishment of the early Church. Their martyrdoms – both in Rome, under the reign of Emperor Nero – are commemorated each year on June 29.

**W Chris Hackett**