

Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles 2026

(Acts 12:1-11; Psalm 34; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18; Matthew 16:13-19)

As I prepare to travel to Rome and Assisi with other pilgrims, it is timely that we should be celebrating the Solemnity of St Peter and St Paul. These two Apostles who both gave their life for Jesus in Rome, the Eternal City. Rome was the capital city of the Roman Empire, the heart of the Gentile world into which Christianity spread from Jerusalem,¹ much of the work to spread Christianity was taken on by these two great saints of the Church.

In our first reading today, we hear the story of St James being martyred and how when Herod saw that this pleased the Jews he arrested St Peter with no doubt a similar intent. However, God had other plans for Peter and sent an angel to aid his escape Peter thought he was experiencing a vision, but it was real and the angel guided him to a place of safety. I think the words Peter uses are another step on his faith journey, when he says, '*Now I am sure...*' Looking back at our own faith journey, are there times we recognise that have helped to convince us we are on the right path? I can think of times when I was struggling with my faith and God found a way of bringing me back to the right path. It may have been a word from a friend, or a direct intervention from a fellow parishioner, but when I look back, I can see that many of these encounters have led me towards the Diaconate.

In the second reading we hear from St Paul, as he reflects on his work for the Lord, he is certain that God has called him and that he has carried out the mission assigned to him. I would love to feel that certainty; the fact that I don't feel it tells me that something is still missing for me. I need to pray more and build my relationship with Christ in a similar way to the saints, who have gone before us.

Our Gospel takes us to Caesarea Philippi, Caesarea Philippi was a city in the time of Christ located in the foothills of Mount Hermon, about fifteen miles north of the Sea of Galilee. The natural spring near Caesarea Philippi is the largest source of the Jordan River. Caesarea Philippi is mentioned only in the New Testament gospels of Matthew and Mark, both recording this same incident.

Caesarea Philippi was named by Herod Philip, whose father, Herod the Great, had built a temple there. Philip took a special interest in the village and enlarged it; attaching his name to that of Caesar. The name Philip gave the town, also served to distinguish it from another town called Caesarea (Acts 10:1). While Caesarea was located in Judea on the border of the Mediterranean Sea, Caesarea Philippi was in Galilee within the land allotted to the tribe of Naphtali. The gospels record Jesus going to Caesarea Philippi only once, possibly because it was sparsely populated and situated on the northernmost border of His travels.²

¹ *A Pilgrim's Guide to Rome and Assisi*, Raymond Goodburn, [Pilgrim Book Services Ltd, Woodbridge, 2010]5.

² [What is the significance of Caesarea Philippi in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org/What-is-the-significance-of-Caesarea-Philippi-in-the-Bible.html)

When Jesus asked the disciples, who do people say I am? He was already aware that some were saying John the Baptist, others Elijah or Jeremiah or another one of the prophets. Jesus also knew that his disciples were gaining confidence to continue following him despite the fact He had never declared who He is. By allowing St Peter to verbalise his belief, Jesus was able to positively share with the disciples who He is. In response, Jesus said '*you are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church*'. This is the first time Jesus mentions '**Church**' in the New Testament. This remote sparsely populated place in the footsteps of Mount Hermon is where Jesus informed the disciples that **He is Christ**.

St Peter and St Paul had their mission; it was to evangelise the whole world. Thanks to their many successes, our mission is smaller, but similar. We have to evangelise those we meet. **Who and how will you evangelise this week?**

Further Reading

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

June 29: The Solemnity of the Apostles Peter and Paul

CCC 153, 424, 440, 442, 552, 765, 880-881: Saint Peter

CCC 442, 601, 639, 642, 1508, 2632-2633, 2636, 2638: Saint Paul³

Please accompany in your prayers

- All those who are sick, either at home or in hospital, especially those who have very few or no visitors.
- Those who have died and those who grieve for them.
- Those who have completed and those who continue with the RCIA programme; especially those who received the Sacraments of Initiation this Easter.
- The success of the Pastoral Area Mission Plan.
- Ryan Hawkes of our Pastoral Area who will be ordained as a deacon next Sunday in Rome.
- Elroi-Jaiden and Edson who will be baptised on Sunday at St Bede's Church.
- Success of the forthcoming pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi.

Deacon Tony

27th June 2026

³ [Homiletic Directory, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments](#)