

## Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise always on my lips. *Psalm*

The Lord stood by me and gave me power. *Second Reading*

'But you, who do you say I am?' *Gospel*

God our Father,  
today you give us the joy  
of celebrating the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul.  
Through them your Church first received the faith.  
Keep us true to their teaching.

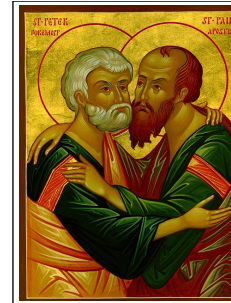
*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:  
Acts 12:1–11; Psalm 33 (34); 2 Timothy 4: 6–8, 17–18; Matt 16: 13–19



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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles  
Year B, 30th June 2024

Their word goes forth  
through all the earth

This weekend we celebrate the ancient feast of Saints Peter and Paul – two giants of our faith on whose shoulders we stand. Both were faithful and unstinting in their mission and are an example to us as we strive to follow Jesus Christ.

In the **First Reading**, we hear how the newly appointed king, Herod Agrippa, begins to persecute the Christian community in Jerusalem. But while Peter is in prison, an angel of the Lord leads him to safety. The **Psalm** is a song of praise, and in particular one of thanksgiving for the psalmist's own deliverance.

In the **Second Reading**, Paul approaches the end of his life and looks back on his ministry with a grateful heart. He recalls how God supported him in his difficult mission and is confident that God will also bring him to the safety of the kingdom.

The **Gospel** tells of Peter identifying Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus rewards Peter for his insight by conferring on him the grace of leadership, a unique position in the community of Jesus.

This week, let us think of our role in the mission of the Church, not forgetting to pray for those who are persecuted for living out their faith.



### Opening Prayer

Grant, we pray, O Lord our God,  
that we may be sustained  
by the intercession of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul,  
that, as through them you gave your Church  
the foundations of her heavenly office,  
so through them you may help her to eternal salvation.

## Second Reading 2 Timothy 4: 6–8, 17–18

**A**s for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his Appearing.

But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

As I prepare to pray, I relax into God's presence by taking some deep breaths, allowing myself to become aware of his love in me and all around me. I rest in this love for some time.

When ready, I read the text slowly a couple of times.

I consider Paul writing these words to Timothy while imprisoned in Rome. Does anything surprise me ... either in this account of Paul's life, or maybe in his tone and attitude? Why is this?

Paul can boast of what he has achieved. How do I feel about this and is there anything I feel proud of in my own life? I speak to the Lord about what arises in me.

Paul also knows he has received the Lord's power to speak in his name. Can I remember being strengthened or supported at times in my life?

How has this increased my trust in the Lord and in his promises?

I turn to the Lord in thanksgiving for all that he has done for me, for being with me in times of trial and in times of joy.

With confidence, I also ask him to be with me in any present need.

Before I end my prayer I place all those who are struggling into his hands.

I end with a *Glory be* ...

## Gospel Matthew 16: 13–19

**W**hen Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up. 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So now I say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.'

I come to my place of prayer and as I settle to pray, I ask the Spirit to be with me and help me pray, that I may be open and attentive.

In time I take up the Gospel passage and read it carefully once or twice.

I may wish to place myself with the apostles, as Jesus asks 'who people say that he is. I listen to their replies.

I hear Peter speaking up. How do I feel about his answer?

And what of Jesus's response to him? The Spirit has enabled Peter to reply, and will enable him in his role as leader.

I pause, and perhaps consider how the Lord has been with his Church through the centuries.

As I ponder this, I imagine Jesus turning to me and looking directly at me as he asks me: 'Who do you say I am?'

I may feel overcome, but I answer Jesus and spend time telling him, from my heart, who he is for me and how I feel about him.

Then, thinking of saints Peter and Paul, I express my gratitude to the Lord for using the gifts of such different people to spread his mission.

I give thanks for those in my church community, and pray that we may work together for the coming of the kingdom.

I close my prayer with a slow *Our Father*.