



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square

Friday, 29 June 2018

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today the Church, pilgrim in Rome and throughout the world, goes to the root of her faith and celebrates the Apostles Peter and Paul. Their mortal remains, safeguarded in the two Basilicas dedicated to them, are very dear to the people of Rome and to the countless pilgrims who come from all over to venerate them.

I would like to pause on the Gospel passage (cf. Mt 16:13-19) that the liturgy offers us on this Feast Day. It recounts a narrative that is fundamental to our journey of faith. It concerns the dialogue in which Jesus asks his disciples the question about his identity. He first asks them: “who do men say that the Son of man is?” (v. 13). And then he asks them directly: “who do you say that I am?” (v. 15). With these two questions, Jesus seems to say that it is one thing to follow the prevailing opinion, and another to encounter him and open oneself to his mystery: there one discovers the truth. Prevailing opinion contains a true but partial response; Peter, and with him the Church of the past, present and always, by the grace of God, responds with the truth: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v. 16).

Throughout the centuries, the world has defined Jesus in different ways: a great prophet of justice and love; a wise teacher of life; a revolutionary; a dreamer of God’s dreams ... and so on. Many beautiful things. In the confusion of these and other hypotheses, still today, a simple and clear one

stands out, the confession of Simon, called Peter, a humble man full of faith: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v.16). Jesus is the Son of God: hence he is perennially alive as his Father is eternally alive. This is the novelty that grace ignites in the heart of those who are open to the mystery of Jesus: the non-mathematical — but even stronger, inner — certainty of having encountered the Wellspring of Life, Life itself made flesh, visible and tangible in our midst. This is the experience of Christians, and it is not their merit, not that of we Christians; it is not our merit, but comes from God; it is a grace of God, the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. All this is contained in the seed of Peter’s response: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”.

Then, Jesus’ response is full of light: “you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it” (v. 18). It is the first time that Jesus says the word “Church”: and he does so expressing all his love for her, which he defines as “my Church”. It is the new community of the Covenant, no longer based on lineage and on the Law, but on faith in him, Jesus, the Face of God. A faith which Blessed Paul VI, when he was still Archbishop of Milan, expressed with this admirable prayer.

“O Christ, our one mediator, You are essential to us: / that we may live in Communion with God the Father; / that we may become with You, who are the one Son and our Lord, / his adopted children; / that we may be regenerated in the Holy Spirit” (*Pastoral Letter*, 1955).

Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles, may the Lord grant that the Church, in Rome and in the entire world, may be ever faithful to the Gospel, to the service of which Saints Peter and Paul consecrated their lives.

After the Marian prayer the Pope greeted the Cardinals and Archbishops present, offering a particular thought to the delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate who had participated in the celebration:

Dear brothers and sisters, this morning, here in Saint Peter’s Square, I celebrated the Eucharist with the new Cardinals created in yesterday’s Consistory; and I blessed the Pallia of the Metropolitan Archbishops nominated this past year, who come from various countries. I renew my greeting and my prayerful good wishes to them and to those who have accompanied them on this festive occasion. May they always live their service to the Gospel and to the Church with enthusiasm and generosity.

In the same celebration I warmly welcomed the Delegation that has come to Rome on behalf of dear Brother Bartholomew. This presence is a further sign of the journey of communion and fraternity which, thanks be to God, characterizes our Churches.

I offer a cordial greeting to all of you, families, parish groups, associations and individual faithful

from Italy and from many parts of the world, especially the Czech Republic, Pakistan, China and the United States of America. And I see Spanish flags: from Spain too.... And from many other countries.

My greeting today is above all for you, the faithful of Rome, on the Feast of the City's Patron Saints! For this occasion the Roman 'Pro Loco' has promoted the traditional flower display which I can see from here, arranged by various artists and by many associations and volunteers. Thank you for this beautiful initiative and for the expressive floral arrangements!

I wish you all a happy feast day. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.
Arrivederci!