

Sunday Readings

29th June 2025

FIRST READING

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 12:1-11

In those days: Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, 'Get up quickly.' And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, 'Dress yourself and put on your sandals.' And he did so. And he said to him, 'Wrap your cloak round you and follow me.' And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. When Peter came to himself, he said, 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.'

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 33:2-9. R/. v5.

R/. From all my terrors the Lord set me free.

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/.**

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/.**

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/.**

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/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy 4:6-8. 17-18.

Beloved: I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

The Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 16:18

Alleluia, alleluia!

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 16:13-19

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time: When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SS PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES

Lectionary Year C

The Word of God

Saint of the Week



It is interesting to note the personalities of both Peter and Paul. Peter was impetuous, telling Jesus that he would die with him on Holy Thursday night if necessary (John 13:37) but later that night he denied he knew him. We also remember Peter's objection to Jesus' prediction that he would suffer and die in Jerusalem and Jesus said 'Get

behind me Satan because they way you think is man's way and not God's way' (Matt 16:23). Yet what made Peter a suitable candidate for Jesus' call was his love, so three times Jesus asked him if he loved him and asked him to look after the flock.

Paul was a controversial character in his own way. He had a fiery personality. In his early life he channelled that fire towards persecuting the Christians in Jerusalem, even witnessing the death of Stephen, the first martyr for Jesus (Acts 8:1). After his conversion Paul's preaching was fiery and upset the churches. In Acts we read that Paul then returned to Tarsus, and the next sentence says it all, "the churches throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria were left in peace" (9:31). Paul spent 10 years back in Tarsus before he began his preaching. It was a time for him to cool down and learn what the death and resurrection of Jesus meant for us all. Why did God call Paul? Paul was a highly educated Pharisee and it would be only someone like him who could see that faith in Jesus demanded a totally new relationship with God for Jews, and also he had a very strong personality which he needed to help the Jews to accept that Jesus was the Saviour of all peoples, and that because of Jesus there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew. Paul had the strong personality needed for that daring challenge and the insight to see that faith in Jesus the fulfilment of their Old Testament hopes was now required for salvation.

As we look at the personalities of Peter and Paul, we see that God called them to use their personalities to spread the Gospel, Peter to use his impetuous love to look after the flock, and Paul to use his training as a Pharisee and his strength of character to ensure that the non-Jews would be welcomed into the church. It is a reminder to us that our talents and our weaknesses too can become God's means of helping others, if we allow. We don't have to be perfect for God to work through us, God can work through us, faults and all, as he did with Peter and Paul.

Friday 4 July 2025

**St Elizabeth of Portugal
(1271 - 1336)**

She was the daughter of King Peter III of Aragón and was named after her great-aunt, St Elizabeth of Hungary. She was married to King Denis of Portugal, by whom she had two children. She set up hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions, patiently endured her husband's infidelities and provided for the education of his bastards, and acted as peacemaker in the quarrelsome and complicated politics of the time. On her husband's death in 1325 she retired from public affairs and devoted herself to prayer and the service of the poor. Throughout her life she was faithful and regular in prayer, and daily recited the Liturgy of the Hours.



In 1336 her son, by now King Alfonso IV of Portugal, went to war against King Alfonso XI of Castile. Elizabeth followed the Portuguese army on the field in an effort to bring about peace. She stopped the fighting and caused terms of peace to be arranged. But the exertion brought on her final illness. As soon as her mission was completed, she took to her bed with a fever from which she died on 4 July.

Prayer of the Week

A Prayer for Humility

Lord,
Give us the humility to lay down our heavy burden of pride,
to set aside the noise of our desires,
to quell the anxious voices of our fears.
Grant us the gift of simplicity of heart,
that seeing, we may see the beauty of the world that you have given us,
and hearing, we may hear the voices of those around us.
Cast us down, Lord, that we may rise stronger,
and become new creatures in your sight, free and holy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.