

MORNING MEDITATION

Saints Peter & Paul, Apostles

When we let go of the need to prove ourselves, nothing and no one can disturb the peace of our hearts and serenity of our spirit.

Acts 12:1-11

The Lord sent his angel to rescue Peter who slept in prison between two soldiers, fastened with double chains, with guards watching at the door. Luke tells us that four squads of soldiers, that is, sixteen soldiers were guarding Peter. But Peter was freed. Remember what happened at the resurrection. Jesus was in the tomb with a heavy stone across the entrance, guarded by soldiers. Peter came to know what it meant to suffer for the Gospel and to experience the care and protection of God.

Learn to trust in the abiding, empowering, protecting presence of God in your life!

Psalm 34

**I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the Lord;
The lowly will hear me and be glad.**

2 Tim 4:6-8, 17-18

“The Lord stood by my side and gave me strength - that’s how I was saved. He will continue to rescue me.....” The author of this letter reflects on the thoughts and feelings of his hero and mentor in the face of his impending demise. He reflects on the cost of discipleship.....life being poured out as libation, time of departure being close at hand, fighting the good fight, running the race to the finish, keeping the faith, etc. This is the real sign and consequence of discipleship, of commitment to Christ. In all this, the real joy lies in being able to say, “I have kept the faith” I have been faithful because the Lord was by my side!

Be faithful....the Lord is by your side!

Mathew 16:13-19

Jesus changes the name of Simon to Peter. Change of name implies radical change, change of character and life-style....becoming a new person.

Jesus asked Peter, "Who do you say I am?" This is a question of relationship - not information. The question was about who Jesus had become for Peter and the other disciples. It is a question that all of us must continue to answer.....

"You are the Messiah!" "You are the rock!" These are responses of commitment, of covenant, of lasting, enduring, eternal relationships.....Jesus and Peter defined each other and affirmed each other in lasting relationship. Jesus affirms that this confession and commitment are not born of reason or logic but of Grace..... ".....flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my heavenly father...." Peter's confession is affirmed and proclaimed as a gift of Grace. As St. Augustine would say, even our longing for God is God's gift.

Jesus also points out that those of us who confess and commit ourselves to him must learn to live in conflict and tension....that the Father will gift us with the power to live out our commitment... "....the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail..."

Saint of the Day, June 29 - Saints Peter and Paul and 6 others are remembered this day.

Peter, originally known as Simon, was a fisherman by profession. Jesus called him, along with his brother Andrew, James, and John, to leave everything behind to become His follower and he did. At the end of a long journey through Tyre and Sidon and back to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked what people thought about him and then what his followers have come to know him to be. Peter made a profound confession of faith that Jesus was the Messiah and Jesus gave him the nickname of "rock" (Matthew 16:18). All the Gospel writers list Peter first when naming the apostles of Jesus. However, Peter, the "rock-man", was weak, imperfect, and so denied having any association with Jesus, three times (Luke 22:61). St. Peter shows us how challenging and difficult it is to follow the way of Jesus. Peter was martyred, crucified upside down on a cross in the year 64 in Rome. He served as the first bishop of Rome, all the bishops of Rome since then being his successors the Popes.

Paul, originally known as Saul, was a Roman citizen. He was a well-educated Jew and a member of the Pharisee party. He was present at the martyrdom of St. Stephen, the first martyr of the Church (Acts 7:58). He was ruthless in persecuting the Christians. He had a dramatic and radical conversion on his way to Damascus and became a staunch defender of faith in Jesus. Saul the persecutor of Jesus became Paul the proclaimer of Jesus and His Gospel (Acts 9). Paul traveled around most of what was then the Roman Empire, establishing Christian communities. He was also martyred in Rome, three years after St. Peter, in the year 67 AD, by being beheaded since his Roman citizenship would not permit his being crucified.

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