

## Reflection Questions

- How do the stories of Peter and Paul encourage you in your own recovery journey?
- Where have you experienced God's strength showing up in your weakness or past mistakes?
- What does it mean for you today to "keep the faith" and continue running the race set before you?

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## **Sunday Mass Readings this Week**

**First Reading:** Acts 12:1-11

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

**Second Reading:** 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18

**Gospel:** Matthew 16:13-19

## **Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles**



The Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul invites us to reflect on the transformative power of grace in the lives of two deeply human men called by Christ. Peter, the impulsive fisherman who denied Jesus three times. Paul, the zealous persecutor of Christians who later became one of the Church's greatest evangelists. Their stories remind us that no past is too broken and no heart too hardened to be reshaped by God's love.

These two pillars of the early Church were not chosen because of their perfection. In fact, their faults were quite visible. Yet it was precisely through their weaknesses that God's strength was made known. In recovery, we find ourselves on a similar path. We do not arrive here because we have it all together, but because we have come to the end of ourselves and are seeking a new way of life—one rooted in honesty, surrender, and hope.

Saint Paul reflects on his own transformation in this Sunday's second reading (2 Timothy 4:6–8, 17–18):

*I, Paul, am already being poured out like a libation,  
and the time of my departure is at hand.  
I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have  
kept the faith.  
From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me,  
which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on  
that day,  
and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his  
appearance.  
...But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength,  
so that through me the proclamation might be  
completed  
and all the Gentiles might hear it.  
And I was rescued from the lion's mouth.  
The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat  
and will bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom.*

We may feel far from sainthood, but we are no strangers to being “rescued from the lion’s mouth.” Whether it was addiction, compulsive behavior, fear, shame, or despair, many of us know what it feels like to be trapped—and what it’s like to be pulled out by grace. Saints Peter and Paul remind us that God not only rescues, He also restores and redeems. Our past does not disqualify us from living with purpose—it prepares us to offer hope to others.

The path of recovery is one of continual transformation. Like Peter, we may stumble and deny what we know to be true. Like Paul, we may carry regret for past harm done. But in both cases, Christ meets us with mercy and sends us out to serve. The same Jesus who asked Peter, “Do you love me?” asks us that question, too—not to shame us, but to draw us deeper into relationship and mission.

We walk this road not alone, but as part of a fellowship—just as Peter and Paul supported the growing Church in unity, though they were quite different in temperament and calling. In recovery, we are invited to unity with others who understand our struggles. We support one another not through judgment, but through shared experience, honesty, and encouragement.

As we celebrate the lives of these two great apostles, we are reminded that the call to holiness and healing is not reserved for the perfect—it is offered to the willing. One day at a time, we place our trust in the One who stood by Peter and Paul—and who stands by us still.