

Daily Homily  
Sts. Peter and Paul, Apostles  
Solemnity  
13 Week in Ordinary Time  
[29 June 2020](#)

Today the Church honors leadership.

Today is a day that reminds all leaders in the Church as well as all disciples in the Church that we do not follow a philosophy. We do not follow an ideology. We are not some politicized party. We are not just an agency for social concerns and social work. We are an institution, but we are more than an institution. We are the Catholic Church. We are the living expression of Christ Jesus in the world. Leaders of the Church, disciples of the Church, we are who we are because of a relationship – not a philosophy, not an ideology – but because of a person, Jesus Christ.

Saints Peter and Paul had this relationship. They were clearly the first leaders of our Church. Jesus took them not only under his wing, but befriended them, loved them and loved them to the end and into a new beginning. The relationship began in different ways and what that relationship led to was everything challenging and life giving all at once.

**PETER:** He was there at all the crucial moments and to take in everything that Jesus had to offer and what Jesus was willing to give. He was the first to say it out loud that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. He was there at the Transfiguration, the raising of a dead child to life, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane. His mother-in-law was cured by Jesus. He was sent to prepare the Passover before Jesus' crucifixion. His name is always first when it comes to the Gospels proclaiming who the Apostles were. Peter was also extremely vulnerable when it came to his relationship with Jesus. While a person of great strength, he was also a person with limitations and weakness. He asked childish questions like, "What are we going to get for all this" (Mt. 19:27). He opposed that Jesus would have to suffer and he felt the full force of Jesus' insistence that this is how it has to be, and Peter should not meddle in any other way. Peter only wanted to forgive seven times, Jesus told him otherwise. He was impetuous enough to walk on water, but sank in doubt. He refused Jesus washing his feet and then changed his mind to have his whole body washed. He says he would never deny Jesus and yet later on denied him, not just once, but three times. He refuses Jesus arrest and yet in the end he runs away from the scene. In the end Jesus, the two, profess their friendship and love for each other. Jesus charges Peter to feed the flock.

What a leader! What a relationship!

**PAUL:** Knocked out of his world view and down to the ground when out of the blue, and out of thin air the risen Jesus speaks directly into Paul's heart and into his life. The voice heard changes Paul completely. He goes from persecuting Christians to being an adamant promoter of the Christian faith. On one hand his Jewish community believes him to be a madman, a traitor, an apostate. On the other hand his new found Christian community, sees him with suspicion and are leery of his motivation and honest conversion. Yet he suffers much for the relationship that knocked him down. He is a fiery preacher and an adamant intercessor. He is beaten, stoned almost to death, thrown out of towns, shunned and embarrassed, and in his travels to spread the gospel is in three shipwrecks. His core teaching: only God can save the human race. The one who saved him, will be the one who saves all. Paul knew this from experience. God made flesh in Jesus Christ came to deliver us and save us from sin, evil, the Enemy's seduction, and even death itself. Humanity must be open to being saved. Humanity must be open to this relationship with Jesus. Jesus radically changed Paul, in turn Jesus can radically change the world.

What a leader! What a relationship!

Jesus died for us and for Peter and Paul. In turn, both Peter and Paul, died for Jesus. They suffered a martyr's death. Paul, not a Roman citizen, was crucified upside down. Peter, a Roman citizen, was given a more "dignified" sentence – beheading.

How is your relationship with Jesus? How has your relationship been fostered and cared for through your Catholic Tradition and Catholic faith? How have you become a leader, a disciple of proclaiming your Catholic faith and your relationship with Jesus to others?