



St Marylebone
Parish Church

Ss Peter & Paul 2020, 8.30am BCP Holy Communion

Readings:

*The First Epistle of St Peter & The Holy Gospel according to St
John*

One is the prince of the Apostles. Clearly the first among equals in the NT accounts and would turn out to be the first Bishop of Rome.

The other is the apostle to us, the gentiles and the patron of our own Cathedral here in London.

Ss Peter and Paul.

Never mind Morecombe and Wise, Ant and Dec, *these* are giants in our Christian family story, and their apostolic ministry continues today. It continues in us. By baptism we have been made members of their family, messengers with them of the same Gospel, the same Jesus.

St Peter tells us today: we have been given 'a new birth into a living hope...glory...love...rejoicing'.

Peter the humble fisherman and Paul the religious scholar are our Fathers in God. Our bishops today are their successors. The Bishop who ordained me and laid hands on my head asking God's Holy Spirit to envelop me and my life into Christ's living Priesthood was himself laid on with hands who was himself laid on with hands right back to St Peter himself. A real human family, fragile and imperfect like every human family. But (like every human family) an instrument of God's love and power and holiness.

God chooses to use bread and wine, water and oil, people and human history to pour out his saving love on us. God is not an *idea*, His grace works in us and the things He has created.

This truth, and the story of our Christian family - Ss Peter and Paul - and us, and the chapters yet to be revealed are what we celebrate today.

So in the words of St Peter: 'As you come to him, the living Stone [Christ]—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2.4-5)

That's a call to every single one of us. To be stones, building a Spiritual house, built on the foundation of the apostles, every

age, a house of refuge and rescue, welcome and love, hospitality and belonging.

That is who we are to be as the church together.

A final note that might help us stay true to these roots, remember and live out who we are, with Ss Peter and Paul...

My grandmother is only like HM the Queen in one way. In her sitting room, just like next to Her Majesty in the Christmas broadcast is a table covered in family photos. In our case, it's tiny people in sailor suits, spotty teens and hungover graduates. It's one of the ways she keeps us in her life, my grandmother that is, not the Queen.

You may have the same on your mantelpiece, or on your phone, or in your wallet or Facebook or desktop background - one of the ways we remember to whom we belong and who we are. Doing the same with our Christian family is a very good idea.

It's what our apse is for, and the window of Our Lady of Tyburn, icons and statues. In some ways, they are simply the mantelpieces and desktop backgrounds of our Christian family - our heavenly family. Your name saint, the Saint's day of your birthday, the patron of your work, or hobby or home town. Why not have a calendar of the saints on the fridge, have a saints day app on your phone to tell you each day who we're celebrating? - see the comments below this video for some ideas.

By holding these members of our family dear, by having them *in* our lives - one our phones and fridges and the walls of our hallways, in our daily routine - we keep plugged into who we are and where we belong. From St Peter to breakfast at home this morning.

Today we celebrate two of our fathers in the faith. They gave us the most precious gift we will ever receive: news of Jesus' Resurrection and our hope of life forever in God. Frail humans, like us, that God is using to bless the world.

Ss Peter and Paul, our family in heaven, with love, pray for us!