



St Marylebone
Parish Church

11 am Sunday Eucharist St Peter and St Paul 2020

Acts 12.1-11 & Matthew 16.13-19

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.*

Today we celebrate the two giants among the apostles, the super apostles, Peter and Paul.

Whenever we celebrate the apostles, we are reminded that God calls us as he called them and that God sends us out to be his apostles.

At the end of this Eucharist we shall hear the words: *Go in the peace of Christ!* This is our commission, our invitation to take on the role of an apostle.

The liturgy the Church celebrates, week in and week out, is not just a performance to which we listen, or upon which we gaze – even when it is online - the liturgy is, whenever it is celebrated, even in these Covid-19 days, a reaffirmation, a living, embodied enactment what it is that we are: men and women called to be saints and apostles.

Just as we believe that Jesus makes himself present in bread and wine, at every Eucharist, so we believe that we become his body and his blood every time we eat the bread and drink from the cup, or as now, make a heartfelt conscious spiritual communion with him.

The reason we come together to break bread and share a cup of wine is so that we can go out into the world as Christ's body proclaiming the Kingdom of Heaven; living the life of the Eucharist as Christ's apostles.

The Greek word '*apostolos*' means 'a messenger', 'an envoy', 'an ambassador', 'a delegate': one who is commissioned and sent by another to represent him and then sent out with a job to do, a message to take.

Like Peter and Paul, Jesus commissions us at every Eucharist to represent him before the world, to take his message with us, as his ambassadors.

Jesus could not have chosen two men who were more different to be his ambassadors: Peter, the uneducated, impetuous Galilean fisherman; Paul, the sophisticated, well-educated Roman Citizen.

But this is the extraordinary thing, Jesus chooses *all sorts* of men and women to be his apostles: illiterate fishermen like Peter, highly educated intellectuals like Paul; housewives and plumbers; university professors, dancers and actors, the list is endless.

The only thing that those whom God calls to be his apostles will have in common is that each and every one of them will have responded positively to that call, more often than not, very hesitatingly at first, through the sharing of bread and wine, through hearing the scriptures read, through sharing stories of faith with each other.

All that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords requires of his ambassadors and envoys, his apostles, is their “fiat”, their “yes”; a willingness to go where his Spirit leads.

There are none better than Peter and Paul to show us just how broad or unexpected, or risky, or bold God’s choice of those whom he calls and sends can be.

Two very different men, summoned by God into his service and then sent out by God's Spirit to carry the good news of salvation; to bring back to God, as Isaiah had prophesied, sons and daughters from the very ends of the earth.

Different, as we all are, God calls us; calls us to be his ambassadors, his envoys, his messengers; his apostles.

May St Peter and St Paul remind us of who and what it is that we are called to be; may their prayers, along with the prayers of the whole Church, support us in our apostleship bringing back to God his sons and daughters. Amen.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.*