



14th Sunday of the Year
6 July 2025
Reflection Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Who do you say that I am?” Matthew 16 : 19

**“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed the man who seeks refuge in him”
(Psalm 33:9)**

I was very happy to be able to make my way to Rome last Saturday night and be there for the Solemnity of St Peter and St Paul on Sunday 29 June. I went to St Peter's on the day when Pope Leo XIV was celebrating the Feast for the first time as Pope, the one walking in the steps of St Peter today. I felt it would be a special occasion for him and like many many thousands of others gathered in St Peter's itself and the Square beyond I wanted to be with him and hear what he had to say. The first thing I experienced was the sheer number of joyous people celebrating this great Feast: happy to be present for the day when the Church marked the martyrdom of the great founding fathers of the Church in Rome 2,000 years ago.

In his Homily Pope Leo spoke of the two very different witnesses to the Risen Christ: Peter the fisherman who was not so well educated, who went first to the Jews; Paul – the intellectual who went to spread the Faith to the Gentiles.

He spoke of them as an example of Ecclesial Communion for today's Church: they are witnesses to being one as followers of Christ in their very different gifts. The Holy Spirit, he said, creates unity in diversity. Then he went on to talk about the importance of unity in witness to the Faith we have when we are asked as Peter was: “Who do you say that I am?” Bishops and Priests, People and Priests, Bishops and the Pope are called to proclaim their belief in “Christ, the Son of the living God”. Unity in the Church itself, I reflected, was a theme he focussed on in his first Homily after his election.

Then he went on to speak of the way St Peter and St Paul challenge us to mission: to open ourselves to new ways of proclaiming the Gospel, not to be tired and static. Peter and Paul inspire us to “vitality in mission” he said. There he touched on “discernment” and I see the theme for the Pope's Prayer Intention for July is: “For formation in discernment”. And the prayer: “Let us pray that we may learn how to discern, to know how to choose paths of life and reject everything that leads us away from Christ and the Gospel.” This Prayer

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Intention is publicised to coincide with the First Friday and the focus there on the Sacred Heart. An interesting article in the Catholic Herald this past month entitled “Formed by the Sacred Heart” reads: “as we grow in understanding – learning from Jesus what he calls us to – we must put it into action. St Gregory the Great said: “I assure you that it is not by faith that you will come to know (Jesus), but by love; not by mere conviction, but by action.”

Later on Sunday 29th I went to the Mass for the Solemnity in the Basilica of St Mary Major, where the tomb of Pope Francis sits near to the chapel of Mary Help of the Roman People, the icon the late Pope went to pray before at the beginning and end of his Apostolic Journeys. The Basilica was packed for the Mass of the Solemnity of St Peter and St Paul: most noticeable and inspiring was the great number of young people attending the Mass, and most of all their obvious devotion to the Holy Eucharist. We hear of the way the tide is turning in the sense that young people are discovering Christ and responding to the call of Faith in him. I wondered why is this coming about now in many parts of Europe and elsewhere: a friend responded it is because they are looking for the one to whom they can look for a way of life that is true that satisfies. My mind returns to another theme of the Holy Father’s Homily that morning and that was “Sacrifice”: St Peter and St Paul, the founders of the church inspire us to reflect on that theme. They gave everything for Christ, as He gave everything for us. St Paul spells this out in the reading to Galatians in the Mass for the 14th Sunday: “Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I think young people are drawn to give all as Jesus did. We pray this 14th Sunday where a theme is the Gospel call to discipleship that we all may hear that call anew, especially so that the young may come to know Christ: may they and their Faith in Him be our legacy for the years to come!

*“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed the man who seeks refuge in him.”
Psalm 33:9 Communion Antiphon 14th Sunday of the Year.*

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