

Homily Outline for the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Springfield, Illinois
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S.S.P.: Saints Peter and Paul teach us: 1) to bring our faith into the world; 2) the world will not always welcome that message; 3) we must be ready to die for our faith.

- I. On entering Cincinnati's Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains, visitors are awed by the largest glass and stone mosaic in the United States.
 - A. It features three scenes from Peter's life, including Peter and Paul comforting each other at the prison in Rome, prior to their executions.
 - B. The life-size glass and stone letters read, "*Et Petrus Quidem Servabatur in Carcere Vincit Catenis*" (Latin for, "And indeed Peter was kept in prison, bound with chains").
 - C. Why did Ss. Peter and Paul go to Rome where they were imprisoned and died? Why are we Roman Catholic?
 1. Ss. Peter and Paul went to Rome because that was the center of the Roman Empire.
 2. If they were to bring Christianity to the world, they had to go to Rome.
 3. Saints Peter and Paul teach us to bring our faith into the world.

- II. Saints Peter and Paul faced hostility and hardships preaching the Gospel.
- A. The obstacles and challenges did not deter them.
 - B. In our first reading today (*Acts* 12:1-11), we hear that Peter was freed by an angel from the chains that were intended to prevent his preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ.
 - C. In our Responsorial Psalm (34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9,, we sang, "The angel of the Lord will rescue those who fear him."
 - 1. We each have a guardian angel.
 - 2. We should pray to our guardian angel to protect us and rescue us from evil.
 - D. In the second reading (2 *Tm* 4:6-8, 17-18), Paul writes from prison to his coworker Timothy that God has rescued him from every threat and will bring him safely to the kingdom of heaven.
 - E. In July of 2021 at the Napa Summer Conference in Napa, California, I met Jonathan Roumie, the actor who portray Jesus in the TV series, *The Chosen*.
 - 1. He was part of a panel discussion that evening and the moderator pretended that he did not know him, asking, "What is your name?"
 - 2. Jonathan put on his best Jesus voice and asked, "Who you say that I am?"
 - 3. Everyone laughed, as you did, because we are familiar with the line from today's Gospel (*Mt* 16:13-19) when Jesus asks His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?"

4. Simon Peter answers, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

5. This scene is depicted in the first stained glass window on our north wall.

III. Saints Peter and Paul teach us: 1) to bring our faith into the world; 2) the world will not always welcome that message; 3) we must be ready to die for our faith, as Ss. Peter and Paul died as martyrs for the faith.

A. Being a Christian involves sacrifice.

B. In some countries, such as Nigeria, people are being killed simply because they are Christian.

C. In our country, standing up for the faith may mean dying to our self-interest, e.g., when our job or finances are threatened.

IV. Today concludes Religious Freedom Week in the United States

A. The theme in keeping with this Jubilee Year is "Witnesses to Hope."

B. We are asked to do three things: Pray – Reflect – Act.

C. In our Eucharist, we receive the Body of Christ, who sends us into the world to do good works and bring glory to God!

May God give us this grace. Amen.