

3rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – PATRONAL DAY

Peter and Paul, Apostles and Martyrs

ST PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA

Sunday 29th June 2025

Fr. Stephen Monsieigneur

Readings: Acts 12:1-11 / Psalm 34:1-10 / 2 Timothy 4:6-18 / John 21:15-22¹

Theme: *St Peter: A Journey of Grace, Courage, and Calling*

Acts 12:1-11

12 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. 4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

⁶ The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. ⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

⁸ Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. ⁹ Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

¹¹ Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."

Psalm 34:1-10

¹ I will extol the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.

² I will glory in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

³ Glorify the Lord with me;
let us exalt his name together.

⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.

⁵ Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.

¹ NRSVUE

- ⁶ This poor man called, and the Lord heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.
- ⁸ Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.
- ⁹ Fear the Lord, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
- ¹⁰ The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

2 Timothy 4:6-18

⁶ For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Personal Remarks

⁹ Do your best to come to me quickly, ¹⁰ for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. ¹² I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

¹⁴ Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. ¹⁵ You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

¹⁶ At my first defence, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

John 21:15-22

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

²⁰ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”)²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”

²² Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.”

SERMON

Often, we are oblivious to the significance of the naming of a Christian church or parish. Not due to a lack of care, but I believe a lack of understanding or appreciation of the importance of identity. Think of how many things are named in honour of a person or group, an event. Identity is an inescapable part of our being and belonging.

Today marks the day when we here in this place of worship celebrate our patronal Saint. Saint Peter, but who is he? What is his significance? What might being known as St Peter’s mean to us as a faith community?

Peter was a fisherman, not a person of power or prestige, not an academic sort, but a hardworking blue-collar industry kind of bloke. Peter was married, lived in an ordinary house with the ordinary ups and downs of life in his time. Yet from such ordinary beginnings, Peter becomes one of the twelve apostles of Jesus and one of the first leaders of the early Christian Church. Peter appears repeatedly and prominently in all four New Testament gospels, as well as in Acts of the Apostles. Peter is regarded by many in Christianity as being the first Bishop of Rome, and also as the first bishop of Antioch.

The story of St Peter is one of the most transformative journeys in scripture—a narrative filled with missteps, restoration, courage, and enduring faithfulness. When we reflect on today’s passages² side by side, we begin to see how Peter’s life is transformed by knowing Jesus, and he becomes a beacon of hope for all who stumble, struggle, and seek to follow Christ with authenticity.

Peter knew hardship, loss and pain, but like Elijah, Peter knew perseverance in trusting God. We read in Acts³, of Peter’s imprisonment, guarded by soldiers, and facing likely execution—yet miraculously delivered by an angel of the Lord. It’s a moment that echoes the

² Acts 12:1–11, Psalm 34:1–10, 2 Timothy 4:6–18, and John 21:15–22

³ Acts 12:1–11

resurrection itself: chains falling, light shining, and Peter rising from darkness into freedom. This physical rescue is deeply symbolic—it reveals God’s commitment not only to Peter’s mission, but to His mercy. Peter, once the man who denied Jesus, is now the one whom God still chooses, protects, and propels forward. There is hope here: our past failures do not disqualify us from God’s future plans.

Psalm 34 resonates like Peter’s personal testimony. Though written by David, its words could have been on Peter’s lips after his deliverance: “I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears... This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” Peter’s willingness to cry out in weakness—whether in fear, grief, or prayer—is met by divine faithfulness. Here we see that hope is not found in our strength but in our surrender.

The same Peter who was once impulsive and afraid has matured into the rock on which the early Church stands. Yet his hope is not built on bravado, but on grace. This is especially poignant in John⁴, where Jesus tenderly restores Peter after the resurrection. Three times, Christ asks, “Do you love me?”—echoing the three denials. Each repetition is both a wound and a balm, a reminder and a release. Rather than disqualifying Peter, Jesus recommissions him: “Feed my sheep.” The path ahead will not be easy—Jesus even foretells Peter’s martyrdom—but it is grounded in love and calling. Here is hope for the weary disciple: even when we fall, Christ restores us not to where we were, but to where we are needed.

Timothy⁵—Though written by Paul—offers us insight into the legacy of apostolic endurance to which Peter also belonged. When Paul writes, “The Lord stood by me and gave me strength... and I was rescued from the lion’s mouth,” we’re reminded of Peter’s similar experiences of deliverance and perseverance. Both apostles, once enemies and now united in mission, embody a hope that transcends suffering. Even in abandonment, trial, or death, they are not alone. And neither are we.

What emerges from Peter’s life is this: hope is not the absence of failure, fear, or suffering—it is the certainty of God’s faithfulness through them all. Peter shows us that we can be deeply flawed and still profoundly used. That we can falter and still feed sheep. That we can weep bitterly and still be led into joy. His story is not tidy, but it is true—and that is its power.

As we celebrate today, surrounded by the pressures and realities of a world broken in so many ways, I implore you to take heart. If Peter, with all his shortcomings, could find hope beyond denial, beyond prison, beyond trial, so can we. The God who stood beside him stands beside us, still whispering: “Follow me.”

Let us pray
 Lord Jesus,
 In our faltering, be our strength.

⁴ John 21:15-22

⁵ 2 Timothy 4:6-18

In our denials, be our mercy.
In our calling, be our guide.
Grant us courage to be like Peter,
with Hope that endures,
and grace to follow you—
Even through shadows, into light. Amen.