



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

*I have kept the faith*

St. Peter and St. Paul 2018 Bodmin

This great feast brings together two giants of the Faith – two fellow martyrs, witnesses to Christ – and two men upon whom, in their very different ways, depended (and depends) the Mission of the Universal Church of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Lord and Saviour.

We are familiar with their comparisons and contrasts. The simple fisherman - the highly intellectual rabbinically trained Pharisee. The impetuous enthusiastic follower of Jesus – the persecutor whose life was turned around by sudden encounter and whose profound and careful thought informs two thousand years of Christian theology. The big man who denied Christ and then returned in penitence to fulfil his destiny as leader of the Faithful. The little man who walked back into cities where he had been beaten and left for dead to repeat the message of the Gospel. The proclaimer of the simple truth of the Gospel Way and a colleague whose complex writings and mystical wisdom St. Peter confesses that even he struggles with at times.

Even in their deaths they were in stark contrast. Peter hung upside down in the throbbing circus of the Vatican Hill. Paul taken out to enjoy the privilege of a Roman citizen, beheading, outside his small cell in what is now the quiet abbey gardens of the Three Fountains.

The truth is that Christ needed them both for the work of His Church. Vastly different as they were, what they had in common was the key – an unshakeable love of Jesus and a commitment to the Gospel of salvation for the world. This is always what holds the Communion of Saints together. It is the eternal bond of charity and revelation, solidarity in Christ.

Heaven, thank God, is not monochrome or uniform but made up of countless millions of very different people who have these simple but essential things in common.

I find it useful and salutary to remember that. We spend an hour or so together on a Sunday and, for a few, some hours during the week. How would you fancy spending an eternity with this crew? Look around you. OK we will not be so frail and dodderly because we will be enjoying the resurrection body. Also, being Catholics and therefore realists, we will have undergone the purifying love of God in the Purgatory. And it won't just be us.

We will be with all these heroes of the Faith. It's what we pray in the Canon of the Mass.

'To us also, your servants who, though sinners, hope in your abundant mercies, graciously grant some share and fellowship with your holy apostles and martyrs.....'

So the future is amazing but, if we want an idea of whether we are on the right track it's not a bad thing to just look around occasionally (starting in the bathroom mirror) and ask the simple question,

'Would we be happy to spend eternity together?'

Do we love Jesus? Do we love one another? Do we love the world for which He died?

Saints are many and various but this is what they have in common.

On this great Feast let us take a moment to rejoice in our common destiny with all the servants and handmaidens of the Lord.

St. Peter and St.Paul .....pray for us.

 2018 Fowey Retreat