

## ***Homily for the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul***

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Today we are celebrating the solemnity of the Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles. Both of them in their life were living in a very particular way the destiny of Christ living the beatitudes which the Lord Jesus taught them.

And it is important to bring to mind the important teaching of the pope Benedict XVI regarding these Saints. He says: *“Faith that comes to us as a word must also become word in us, a word that is simultaneously the expression of our life.”* That is to say, the word which we do contemplate in the letters of Sts. Peter and Paul (given to us as a nourishment during the Liturgy of the Word) must become the word and deed in us and through us. And this will be made possible only if each one of us become an attentive listener of the Word of God. And St. Paul speaks about this today in his letter to Galatians: *“But when God, who from my mother’s womb had set me apart and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me so that I might proclaim him to the Gentiles I did not immediately go up to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before me; rather, I went into Arabia.”* He was caught up to the third heaven. And it is at that moment during 3 years (= similar to the Apostles) the contemplation of the words of God was a moment when Christ our Lord was forming in him. Benedict XVI continues: *“We must accustom ourselves to God, just as God accustomed himself to us man. We must accustom ourselves to God’s ways so that we can learn to bear his presence in us.”* Only after a meeting with St. Peter St. Paul will be sent to preach to the world of the Gentiles the Gospel, to the world that is still expecting the revelation of the sons of God.

We have started this homily by saying that the Apostles were living in a very particular way the beatitudes. Both of them were persecuted and suffered martyrdom for the sake of righteousness. In fact, St. Paul writes in his letters: *“We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying and behold we live; as punished and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything”* (2 Cor 6: 8-10). *“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed”* (2 Cor 4:8-9). St. Paul writes of his experience of suffering considering that he has been made *“the last of all”*, and yet he experiences boundless joy. We can clearly see here the interconnection between of Cross and Resurrection: We are handed over to death *“so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh”* (2 Cor 4;11). We can do everything in the One who gives us strength. This is so prophetic in our day. And Pope *Benedict XVI* in his book *Jesus of Nazareth* writes something very important concerning the life of every Christian, saying: *“In his messengers Christ himself still suffers, still hangs on the Cross. And yet He is risen, irrevocably risen. Although Jesus’ messenger in this world is still living the story of Jesus’ suffering, the splendor of the resurrection shines through, and it brings joy, a blessedness, greater than the happiness he could formerly have experienced on worldly path. Only now he realizes what real happiness, what true blessedness is.”*

Today’s celebration of the Solemnity of the Apostles Peter and Paul, of their life and martyrdom, traces for us the destiny of life of every Christian. We as well, while living in this world in the midst of the struggles and difficulties, are called by God to follow their footsteps, so that the word they handed over to us, which we do contemplate here, may become at the same time the expression of our life until Christ is formed in us.

May the intercession of the Apostles Peter and Paul help us to imitate them and as well to become another image of Christ.