

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

EPISTLE: 2 Corinthians 11:21b - 12:9

GOSPEL: Matthew 16: 13-19

FESTAL HYMNS

TROPARION TONE 4

O foremost in the ranks of Apostles,
And teachers of the world,
Intercede with the master of all
To grant safety to the world and to our
Souls the great mercy.

KONTATION TONE 2

O Lord, You have taken up to their eternal rest
And to the enjoyment of Your good things, the two
Infallible preachers of divine truths and leaders of
The apostles, for You have accepted their struggles
And their death as being better than any sacrifice,
O You, who alone know the secrets of hearts.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

St. Peter traditionally is regarded as the leader of the Twelve Disciples of Jesus. He was intimately connected with the earthly life and ministry of our Lord, and after His death tried to preserve the spiritual legacy left by Jesus to his followers. In the course of his missionary journeys, Peter founded the Church in Antioch, where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. The Church regards St. Peter as the first Bishop of Antioch, and the present-day Patriarch of Antioch is his successor in that Apostolic See.

St. Paul is the greatest of missionaries. The marvelous story of conversion on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1-22) is hardly more striking than the rest of his life, one of the greatest adventure stories of history.

The account of Paul's missionary journeys and the letters he wrote to the Churches he founded form an important part of the New Testament. He traveled over vast areas of the Roman world, preaching Christ, and fashioning the Christians Faith for all time. He called himself an Apostle, and he was the greatest of them, although he was not of the Twelve Disciples. St. Paul was martyred in Rome during the reign of the Emperor Nero, about 67 AD.

*Taken from **THE ICON BOOK** by Boojamra, Essey, McLuckie & Matusiak, Department of Christian Education, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1981.*

Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome under Emperor Nero in the year 67. Peter was crucified head down, at his own request, and because Paul was a Roman Citizen, he was beheaded. The Church unites them in a common celebration and gives them identical honor.

Peter, a brother of Andrew the First-Called, was from Bethsaida. They were the sons of Jonas, of the tribe of Simeon. They lived by the work of their hands. At the time when John the Baptist was in prison, Jesus came to the Lake of Genesarett, and finding Peter and Andrew mending their nets, He called them and they followed Him without hesitation. Peter preached the Gospel in Judea, founded the Church of Antioch, and finally came to Rome.

Paul, a Pharisee, belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. He was born in Tarsus of Asia Minor. At first, he persecuted the Church with great zeal and violence, imprisoning killing Christians. But Christ appeared to him on the way to Damascus and changed his heart. Ananias baptized him in Damascus. He was to become one of the greatest exponents of Christ's teachings, which he explained in his letters or epistles.

*Taken from **BYZANTINE DAILY WORSHIP**, Alleluia Press, 1969, pp. 709-710.*

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

1. The Feast of SS Peter and Paul is preceded by a period of fasting that begins the day after All Saints and ends with the Feast day. [All Saints is celebrated the Sunday after Pentecost.] Like the other fast periods of the year, the Church reminds us to prepare with fasting and prayer.
2. Come to celebrate the Feast day in Church as a family, if not on the day itself due to work, then at least on the eve of the Feast.
3. As a family, read the Epistle reading to learn more about St. Paul.
4. If you have an icon of this Feast, display it in your family's place of prayer. Discuss the icon with your children.
5. On the day of the Feast, use the Troparion and Kontakion hymns as prayers before and/or after meals and as part of evening prayers.

THE ICON

Saint Peter - on the left; he is portrayed as an elderly man with white hair and beard; his inner garment is traditionally green and his outer garment is yellow or gold.

Saint Paul - on the right; he is portrayed with brown hair and beard; his inner garment is blue and his outer garment is purple.

The saints embrace each other to denote their concord of love and faith in Jesus Christ.

*Taken from **THE ICON BOOK**• by Boojamra, Essey, McLuckie & Matusiak.*

*Compiled by Phyllis Meshel Onest, Director of Religious Education
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SAINTS PETER & PAUL
Commemorated on June 29