

29.6.81
29.6.92Tu Es Petrus
(Dunlop)

'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church': the words of Jesus Christ in St Matthew's gospel; and one of the antiphon-verses in the prayer of the Church on this day, which is the Feast-day of St Peter and Paul, and one of the major Saints' days of the Christian calendar. Peter & Paul have always been celebrated together, as if to emphasize that they're the twin pillars of the Church, and because they both were martyred in Rome for their faith. The remarkable excavations that have ~~been~~ ^{been} done under the Basilica of St Peter's in Rome have revealed that, not only was the site beneath the present high-altar a burial site in the middle of the 1st century, but that someone very special was buried there and in a very deliberate way, in the middle to late sixties of that century. That's archaeology supporting the celebration today of St Peter's martyrdom as head of the Church in Rome, when St Paul too gave his life in Roman execution in witness to the message and faith he'd preached and spread so widely. | This is part of what St Augustine said about ^{this day & its festival} today, nearly 16 hundred years ago: 'This day has been made holy by the martyrdom of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul.... The blessed Peter, foremost of the apostles, the passionate lover of Christ, heard his merits acknowledged: 'I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.' He meant: Upon this rock I will build the faith which you profess. Because you said to me 'you are the Christ, the Son of the living God', I will build my Church on you. For you are Peter.' Peter's name is derived from the word for a rock and not vice-versa. In the same way a Christian is named after Christ.... It was logical for the Lord to entrust the care of his sheep to Peter after his resurrection. He was not, of

course, the only disciple worthy of this responsibility. When Christ spoke to one, all were included: Peter was addressed first because he was the foremost apostle. Do not be dismayed, Peter. Answer once, twice, three times. Your confession of love must be proclaimed three times because your presumption was three times dashed by your fear. The knot you tied three times must be as often untied. Untie from love what you tied from fear. In spite of all, the Lord three times entrusted his sheep to Peter. One day is assigned for the celebration of the martyrdom of two apostles. But those two were one. Although their martyrdom occurred on different days, they were one. Peter went first, Paul followed. We celebrate the feast-day which is made sacred for us by the blood of these apostles. Let us love their faith, their life, their trials, their passion, their profession, and their teaching." — So, St Augustine. From Peter himself, though, these words: 'My dear people, if you can have some share in the sufferings of Christ, be glad, because you will enjoy a much greater gladness when His glory is revealed. It is a blessing for you when they insult you for bearing the name of Christ, because it means that you have the spirit of glory, the spirit of God resting on you.' | In honour of St Peter as we pray this day, let's hear again, in another setting to music, those same words of Christ, 'You are Peter' — Tu es Petrus

(Pelutrin) (Byrd)

MUSIC

PRAYERS

Part of our
(Brev.)

HATV. E. 117

2³

2:31

Allegr.: And

13 3:23

It's been said (but I don't know ^{how accurately} ~~with what accuracy~~) that there've been more
 martyrs for the Christian faith in this century than in any other: people who've
 been killed, given their lives, in witness to their faith, their commitment to
 the Person of Christ, their love for their fellow men and women ^{and I personally have been privileged to be} ~~had in their sacrifice~~
 and suffering they have shared the experience of their Lord and Master ^{one such as a fellow-} ~~as the 60s~~
 Peter & Paul did too: Peter (as the tradition says), not wanting to be thought
 the equal of Christ, asking to be crucified upside down. When Jesus gave him
 that commission to 'feed His sheep', He also told him "As a young man you
 fastened your belt and went about as you pleased; but when you are older you
 will stretch out your hands, and another will tie you fast and carry you off
 against your will." Today, that still happens to other Christians, and
 nowhere in the world is it really "safe" to be a follower of Christ — it
 never really was, either: for the cross and the passion of Christ remain in the
 world. As long as we human beings have not learned really to love one another,
 there will continue to be witnesses to the love that God has for us all and to
 the highest meaning of loving each other with and in the love that binds us to
 Christ. Not even St Peter's successor in Rome is "safe" from the power
 that will not accept the good-news and the message that St Paul first
 preached, the gift of God's love that he brought, or the prayer that he made
 that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the
 Holy Spirit might be with us always.

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well
 always and everywhere to give you thanks.
 You fill our hearts with joy as we honour your great apostles:
 Peter, our leader in the faith, and Paul; its fearless preacher.
 Peter raised up the Church from the faithful flock of Israel,
 Paul brought your call to the nations, and became the teacher
 of the world. Each in his chosen way gathered into unity
 the one family of Christ. Both shared a martyr's death and
 are praised throughout the world. Now, with the apostles and
 all the angels and saints, we praise you for ever: