



AR - DE - EN - ES - FR - IT - PL - PT

HOLY MASS AND BLESSING OF THE SACRED PALLIUM FOR THE NEW
METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOPS
ON THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL
PAPAL MASS

HOMILY OF POPE LEO XIV

St Peter's Basilica
Monday, 29 June 2026
[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today, in a single Solemnity, we commemorate Saints Peter and Paul, the patron saints of the city and Diocese of Rome. One was chosen by Jesus as shepherd of his flock, and the other as apostle to the Gentiles. In them, we venerate two pillars of the Church.

Peter, guardian of the People of God, is often portrayed in the New Testament as striving to preserve communion among the brothers. It is he who, after a night of seemingly fruitless labor on the Sea of Galilee, says to the Master, "we caught nothing. But on your word, I will release the net" (*Lk* 5:5). He then sets sail, taking the others with him. Again, while many are turning away from the Lord after the difficult discourse on the Bread of Life, it is he who says to the Messiah, "To whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life" (*Jn* 6:68), and remains together with the other eleven. It is he who, at Caesarea, recognizes Jesus as the Son of God and, as we heard in the Gospel (cf. *Mt* 16:13–19), speaks for all in professing the one faith. Even after the Resurrection, on the shore of the lake, Peter is the first to reach Christ, jumping into the water and swimming ahead of the others to humbly renew his love and receive confirmation of his mission (cf. *Jn* 21:1–17).

Peter remains faithful to this mission even when, for example, in Jerusalem, the question of admitting uncircumcised Gentiles to Baptism threatens to divide the community. He gathers the brothers together, listens to them and in the end, guided by the Holy Spirit, makes a decision that preserves communion and ushers in a new era for the entire People of God. Indeed, he declares, "We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will" (Acts 15:11).

This magnanimity does not mean that Peter is perfect. During the Passion, he denies the Master, only later to shed sincere tears of repentance (cf. *Lk* 22:54–62); and Paul himself, in different circumstances, rebukes him for the inconsistency of some of his actions (cf. *Gal* 2:11–14). Yet Peter knows how to acknowledge his mistakes and repent, without becoming discouraged and without failing in his mission to proclaim the Gospel and gather Christ's flock, even unto martyrdom — a fate which he suffered here in Rome, not far from where we are gathered.

This faithful and patient concern for unity is well expressed by the symbol of the keys, with which we often identify Peter (cf. *Mt* 16:19). A key does not break down doors; rather, it opens and closes them by finding the proper levers within and guiding their movements, so that locks may release, bolts withdraw, and doors turn freely on their hinges, thereby joining rooms together and transforming many isolated spaces into one welcoming home. In the same way, communion within the Church is not built by clinging rigidly to one's own position, but by seeking, in all hearts, points of encounter in the Truth, in whose light alone each person becomes a means of growth for another.

In this light, we can interpret the mission entrusted by the Lord to Peter and his Successors for the benefit of the entire holy People of God. It is a mission to listen, with his help, to the voice of each person; to discern inspirations; to guide the way; to correct errors; to instruct, encourage, exhort and accompany our brothers and sisters so that, docile to the action of the same Spirit (cf. *1 Cor* 12:1–11), they may cooperate in the salvation of one another and of all humanity. Moreover, Peter's example is an invitation to every Christian to become a builder of unity, placing God at the center of one's life and drawing close to one's brothers and sisters, attentive to their circumstances and needs (cf. Francis, *Catechesis*, 9 October 2024). In this way, we learn to live with one another in charity, so that the message might be fully proclaimed (cf. *2 Tim* 4:17).

This is also the teaching of Paul, the other great apostle we celebrate today and the tireless herald of the Good News. He, too, has distinctive symbols: the book and the sword, which are closely linked to one another. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews explains this well when he writes that, “the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword,” capable of penetrating “until it divides soul from spirit” and of discerning “the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (*Heb* 4:12).

This is what God accomplished in the heart of the young Saul, winning him over (cf. *Phil* 3:12), bringing him first to conversion to the Gospel and giving him a new name, and then sending him to proclaim it throughout the world. Finally, like Peter, he was to bear witness to the Gospel even to the point of giving his life in this very city. The apostle to the Gentiles allowed himself to be transformed by the power of God’s word, which rescued him from the way of violence and led him onto the path of love.

Saint Augustine, commenting on Paul’s conversion and mission, said, “As he was traveling [to Damascus] with a heart filled with threats and murder, he was called by name and thrown to the ground by the heavenly voice (cf. *Acts* 9:1–7), that is, by the Word who was calling him” (*Sermon* 299/A *augm.*, 6). And he added: “God took the persecutor of the Church and made him a messenger of peace. He forgave him all his sins and placed him in a ministry where he could forgive the sins of others” (*ibid.*).

Dear friends, it is important for us today to look to these two Saints — Peter and Paul — to understand how we, in turn, can be apostles and builders of unity, and generous servants of the truth in charity. In this spirit, we are about to celebrate the ancient and moving rite of the conferral of the pallia on the Metropolitan Archbishops. These bands of white wool adorned with crosses indeed express the commitment of every Shepherd — and also of every Christian — to take upon their shoulders the brothers and sisters entrusted to them, like so many lambs of the Lord’s flock, and to sacrifice their energy, time, effort and even their lives for them. They do so in order that the Gospel may reach everyone, and the whole world may find in it harmony and concord (cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 38).

With these sentiments, I joyfully extend cordial greetings to the members of the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, sent by my dear brother His All Holiness Bartholomew and led by His Eminence Emmanuel, Metropolitan of Chalcedon.

Let us pray to Saints Peter and Paul that they may sustain us on our journey of communion in the footsteps of the Savior. This is the path he has laid out for us, the very thing for which he prayed to the Father at the Last Supper (cf. *Jn 17:21–23*), and the goal toward which he has taught us to aspire with confident hope (cf. Benedict XVI, *[Homily at the Mass for the Imposition of the Sacred Pallium on Metropolitan Archbishops](#)*, 29 June 2012).

Copyright © Dicastery for Communication - Libreria Editrice Vaticana



The HOLY SEE

[FAQ](#) [LEGAL NOTES](#) [COOKIE POLICY](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#)