**The Feast of St. Peter & St. Paul.**

***“Why do two great saints like Peter & Paul share a single feast d***ay”? Maybe we could speculate that they couldn’t get along here on earth, so God put them together in heaven.

**First,** **we have Peter**- the disciple chosen by Jesus to lead the Church inspite of his stubbornness, the sinfulness, his denial of Jesus, and his seeming incomprehension about Jesus’ mission here on earth! This is the disciple forgiven again and again, and affirmed gain and again, and in todays’ account, freed from a sure and certain death in prison to continue his own mission.

**Then we have** **Paul**- a persecutor of believers in Jesus’ way who underwent a truly-life-changing conversion on the road to Damascus.

Biblical evidence would suggest that neither Peter nor Paul would be comfortable having their holy day celebrated jointly, so much does the New Testament bear witness to the profound conflict that existed between them**. Paul was a Roman citizen** (Acts: 22:25), a strict Jew brought up in Jerusalem, the center of Jewish culture (Acts 26: 4-5), highly educated against the followers of Jesus (Acts: 4-13).

**Peter was a fisherman (Mt.4:189) from Galilee, lacking religious sophistication (Mk: 33), and clearly uneducated** (Acts: 4:13) Peter had a legitimate claim to a position of leadership among the apostles **from Todays’ Reading**, while **Pauls’ apostleship was self-proclaimed**, see verse one in every epistle). Peter was happy to stay close to Jerusalem while Paul ranged far and wide. Paul was deeply critical of Peters’ ambivalent approach to table fellowship with the Gentiles (Galatians 2: 11-12), and Peter might have known about their rivalry in Corinth between his own people and Pauls’ (1 Corinthians 1:12).

As we **look at the personalities of Peter and Paul**, we see that God called them to use their respective personalities to spread the Gospel; Peter is the prince of the Apostles and Paul is the Apostle to the gentiles. Peter to use his impetuous love to look after the flock; and Paul to use his training as a Pharisee and his strength of character to ensure that non-Jews would be welcomed into the Church. It is a reminder to us that our talents and our weaknesses too, have to be perfect for God to work through us, God can work through us, faults and all, as **he did with Pater and Paul.**

Tradition says that **Peter later travelled to R**ome and there he was reconciled to Paul and both suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Romans. Thus **Peter and** Paul became the symbol of unity, and unity is possible. **St. Augustin** once said of the saints Peter and Paul, “***Both the apostles share the same feast day, for these two were one; and even though they suffered on different days, they were as one.”*** **Peter went first, and Paul followed**. And we so celebrate this day made holy for us by the apostle’s’ blood. Let us embrace what they believed, their life, their labors, their sufferings, their preaching, and their confession of faith.