

Lord, today we gather as your people to celebrate the great feast of Saints Peter and Paul. We know a lot about them.

- **Like your son, Jesus, both Peter and Paul were born Jews,**
 - **born into the covenant you made between yourself and the Israelite people, born among a people you made your very own.**
- **Both Peter and Paul were craftsmen; they worked with their hands. Peter, the fisherman; Paul the tentmaker.**

Both men had things in their past they had to repent of:

- **Peter denied Jesus three times when Jesus went on trial for his life;**
- **Paul went to extremes to persecute the church of God and tried to destroy it to the point of having Christians dragged out of their homes and having them killed.**

Yet, Lord, your risen son sought out Peter and Paul and asked them some pointed questions:

- He sought out Peter on the seashore and asked him a simple question, the only question that really matters for a follower of Christ, “Do you love me?”
- And Lord, your son, sought out Paul on the road to Damascus when he was on his way to kill more Christians. To Paul you asked another simple, life-changing question: “Paul, why are you persecuting me?”.

Then you sent both of them on mission.

- You called Peter to catch not fish but people and to be the leader of the community founded by your Son.
- You called Paul not to build tents, but to widen the poles of the tent of believers to include more than just the people of Israel. Paul spread the Jesus movement into the world of the Gentiles. As Paul wrote in one of his letters, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; we are all one in Christ.”

(PAUSE)

Yes, Lord, Peter and Paul, these two apostles both formed the internal organization and outward thrust of our church.

- Peter, recognized as the first among twelve apostles, held the special role of leadership which even today marks the bishop of Rome in the unique role of Catholic Christianity.

- Paul, the apostle to the peoples of the world, is also very special to our faith-community which embraces the people of many nations and which goes by the name of Catholic, universal.

(PAUSE)

And Lord, your call and invitation to sainthood continues today just as it did for the two men named Peter and Paul

Your way with us is the same:

First, you call everyday people: fishermen and tent makers and students and parents and factory workers and office engineers and janitors.

You seek us out even in the midst of our sinful ways,

- ways in which we deny knowing you,
- ways which we persecute you,
- ways in which we ignore you,
- ways in which we simply walk away from you

And then, Lord, you ask us simple questions:

- Do you love me?
- Why are you persecuting me?
- Why do you not take time for me?
- Will you follow me?

And finally, Lord, you call us each by name for an important task in your kingdom, a task just as great as the ones you gave to St. Peter and St. Paul. Our call is great because you ask no other person in the world to do what you want me to do. I am called with them to bring Good News to MY world, MY people, MY everyday surroundings.

You instruct us to extend not the size of our tents but the reach of our arms and invite others into the family of God.

Lord, it is good to be here on the great Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. It is an honor and privilege to be called to join in the work of your son. Lord, it is just very good to be here.