



Anglican Catholic Church  
**Diocese of the United Kingdom**  
Catholic Faith † Orthodox Worship † Apostolic Order



June 2023

*Dear friends and colleagues,*

This month we commemorate the deaths of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. They are known as pillars of the Church, but who were they really?

Peter was from the village of Bethsaida, an unimportant town in Galilee. Life in that part of the country revolved around the Sea of Galilee. Peter had his own business as a fisherman. He was successful and so moved to Capernaum as a master fisherman, and business was good. It was here that Peter met Jesus and left his daily work to become a disciple. Peter's discipleship was costly to him from the very beginning, and at the very end it cost him his life.

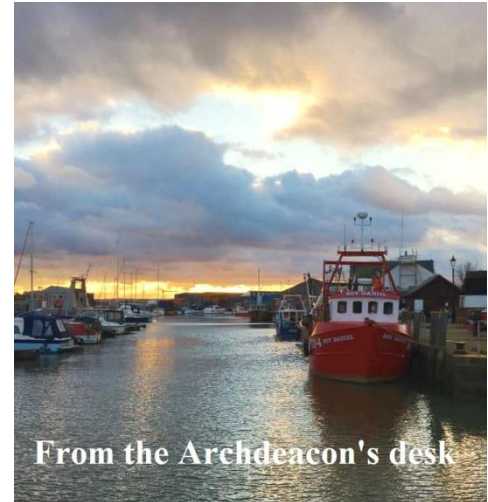
Peter must be one of the most attractive figures of the New Testament. His mistakes, enthusiasm and loyalty show true humanity and we can identify with him. Peter became the speaker for the other apostles and Jesus chose him as leader of the Church. Peter's original name was Simon (meaning the one who listens), but Jesus changed his name to Peter (which means rock). What does this change of name tell us?

All of us have the opportunity to listen to God's word. Peter listened to it, but he didn't stop there. Peter accepted what he heard as quite unique, but he didn't stop there either. Peter lived what he heard, and it is that which made him the rock of the Church. Living the word of God broke all the chains of sin and Peter became the fearless and inspired leader of the Church.

Completely different from Peter is Paul. He was not from poor Galilee but from upmarket Tarsus. Like Peter he was a Jew but also a well-educated Roman citizen. Paul had a substantial business in tent making. He was intelligent, privileged and devoted his life to the Jewish faith. He disliked Christians and took a leading role in the execution of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. St Stephen met his cruel death praying for those who were killing him. This had a dramatic effect on Paul and prepared him to meet Jesus in such a spectacular way on the road to Damascus. This was the remarkable turning point which changed Paul from a persecutor of the Church to its wonderful apostle. The next 37 years of his life were given over to Jesus. His preaching and his sufferings established the Christian community around the whole of the Roman Empire. Paul, in his many letters, invites us to respond to God's call too. We do this also when like Peter we hear, receive and live the word of God.

Peter and Paul died, we are told, as martyrs on the same date and in the same city. It is their cruel death we commemorate each June. It is their love for the Lord Jesus that made them pillars of the faith. May Peter and Paul pray for us that like them we may have that same love for Jesus, and demonstrate it.

*Fr. Raymond Thompson*  
Archdeacon



## Dealing with disappointment

One thing we learn as we get older is the art of dealing with disappointment. That has to be a positive thing, because it probably wouldn't be good for us if everything always went smoothly. There would be nothing to test our determination. Life has its share of disappointments for most of us. Our plans go awry. Our hopes take a battering. The great thing is to avoid letting it get the better of us. The way different people react to adversity is often quite revealing and is all part of life's rich tapestry.

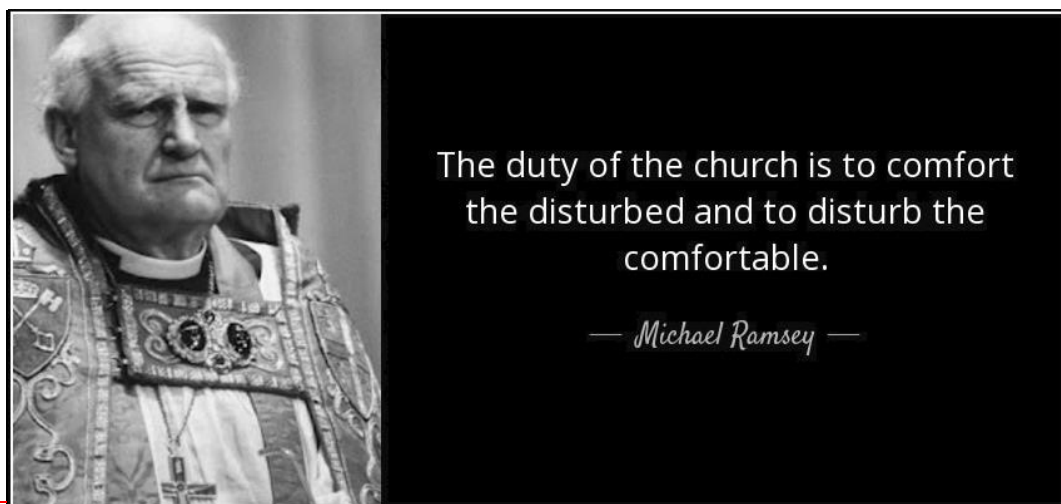
When they are confronted with disappointment, some folks show their best side, while others show their worst. We've all known people who are fine as long as things are running well. But those same people get deflated and demoralised as soon as things go wrong. They can't handle it, and they tend to blame others.

We need to be wary of falling into the temptation of blaming others when things don't go the way we want them to. Also, people don't readily welcome criticism, even if it is meant constructively. They may search around for someone to blame when a situation goes from good to bad, and there are those who find relief, and even pleasure, when they have discovered a convenient scapegoat to whom the blame can be directed.

Then there are those who, when things take a turn for the worse, wrap themselves in self-pity and start blaming life for being so unkind to them. They look for a sympathetic ear, and then pour out the tale of their woes. They tell you about their own undeserved sufferings to persuade you that they are the innocent victims of life's cruelty. Sometimes they become bitter about God and accuse Him of deserting and forgetting them. While we don't want to lose our sympathy for those who are having a rough time of it, we know in our hearts that we ought not to encourage the "blame game".

The great thing is to be able to face up to disappointments and take them without crumbling. Don't blame others for them. Don't blame life. Don't get bitter with and about God. (And there's probably no need to blame yourself.) Just face up to your disappointments and try again, trusting in God to guide you along the best path. Have no doubt that a life with its ups and downs, and its rough and tumble, is a better training ground than a life in which we get all we want on the easiest terms.

Of course, there are plenty of cases where we are moved to sympathy and even tears because of the way the misfortunes of life have fallen on some people, but often it's not those people who do the most complaining. Their courage can shame us, and it ought to be an inspiration as well. Let us learn from them that it isn't what life is perceived to give or withhold which matters – but the way in which we deal with challenging and changing circumstances.



*(My "desk picture" on the previous page shows an Isle of Sheppey scene viewed from my desk, from the garden, or within a few minutes of it.)*