### LSW

children

*The bishops today came from the original twelve Apostles in a particular way. All 5,000 of them were selected by the Pope and were consecrated bishops when they were laid hands upon by three bishops, who themselves were consecrated bishops when they were laid hands upon by three bishops, etc etc until you had bishops who were consecrated bishops when they were laid hands upon by the original Twelve Apostles. This lineage, which we call the Apostolic Succession, is important to us because it means that all 5,000 bishops we have today teach the same thing, which is the teachings of the Apostles. It a bit like knowing who your ancestors are.*

*Today, every Catholics is a Catholic because he/she has been baptised by a priest who has been ordained and reporting to a bishop who was appointed by the Pope. And as all the bishops appointed by the Pope are in communion with him, all Catholics under such bishops will also be similarly be in communion with each other. That is why when I come across a Catholic church wherever I go in the world, I know I am home.*

Year A

###### Ss Peter and Paul

**Images**

Catholics and the Pope

**Points to note**

This Sunday is not part of the normal sequence of Ordinary Sundays as the Solemnity will take precedence over Ordinary Sundays.

There is a board inside the Westminster Catholic Cathedral in London, which lists down the names of all the Popes and next to them, the list of the leading bishops in England at that time. There are two ideas here which are important. Each bishop is consecrated a bishop by another bishop, who has been consecrated by another bishop, who has been consecrated by another bishop, and so on, who has been consecrated by another bishop, who has been consecrated by one of the Apostles. This is known as the Apostolic Succession, the principle that every Catholic bishop traces his lineage back to the Apostles and we have the list of bishops to prove it. Every diocese in the world keeps such a list of its own line of bishops. This list that traces back to the Apostles is our proof that what our bishops teach is the same as what the Apostles, and Jesus, taught.

The other is one of communion. Every Catholic owes allegiance to his or her local bishop. We are said to be in communion with our bishop. Each bishop is in turn in communion with the Pope. Therefore, each Catholic is communion with each other through his or her communion with the local bishop who is in communion with other bishops through his communion with the Pope.

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church.

And the gates of the underworld can never hold our against it.

Alleluia!

Gospel

*Jesus has just been debating with some Jews and Pharisees.*

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Mt 16:13-19)

When Jesus came to the region of Ceasarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But you,” he said, “who do you say I am?” Then Simon Peter spoke up, “You are the Christ,” he said, “the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.”

This is the Word of the Lord

**Dialogue**

Whose feastday is it today? *Today is a double feastday of Saints Peter and Paul.* What colour did Father wear today? *Red, as we are celebrating the feastdays of two martyrs. Explain who martyrs are: people who died for the faith.*

*We celebrate the feastdays of Ss Peter and Paul together because they are linked together as tradition has it that they we both martyred in Rome. It is unlikely that they died together but we know why they both ended in Rome. Peter, as the head of the Apostles, has to go where the Emperor is while Paul, being tried in a local court, wanted to be tried by the Emperor as his right as a Roman citizen. So, both the dedicated servants of Jesus ended in Rome because they were carrying messages from the all-powerful God to the city of the most powerful emperor in the world at that time.*

*We don’t know the story of how Paul died – that story was unfortunately not recorded. But the story of how Peter died was. Peter was running away to escape from soldiers, when he saw Jesus walking the other direction. When he asked Jesus where he was going, Jesus replied that he was going to Rome to be crucified again. Peter was so ashamed of himself that he ran ahead of Jesus and was arrested. He told the soldiers that he should be crucified upside-down as he was not worthy to be crucified like Jesus.*

*After Peter died, his head was cut off and his headless body was buried separately from the head, at a place where a church dedicated to St Peter was later built. Much, much later in the 1950’s, when workmen were building below the high altar in St Peter’s Basilica, they found the remains of a skeleton of a man with no head. Was that the skeleton of St Peter? We don’t know for sure but it is nice to think it is.*

*The original bishops were the twelve Apostles with Peter as their head. As the head bishop, Peter was the first Pope. Today, the successor to St Peter as the Pope is Pope Francis, who is the 266th pope. We have the name of each and every one of them.*