

The Chair of St Peter

This weekend is Saturday the 22 of February, the Feast of the Chair of St Peter, and Sunday the 23 February, beginning the Seventh Week of Ordinary Time.

The Choir of Westminster Cathedral sing Tu Es Petrus by Palestrina: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The Feast of the Chair of St Peter might seem like an incredibly strange thing to celebrate, particularly if you take it at face value. This is a very old feast, celebrated by Christians in and around Rome since the Fourth Century, and it celebrates the unity of the Christian community. The Chair is traditionally the place where a bishop presides from, and so celebrating the Chair of St Peter, celebrates the ideal unity which Christians should have with each other. Today's reading from the First Letter of Peter gives some feel of that unity, and the responsibilities which it entails.

Today's feast celebrates the ministry of Peter in telling people about Jesus and dedicating himself to strengthening the sense of community among the Christians of Rome. For Peter, maybe, there was a moment when he realised that he was not just a follower of Jesus, but charged with the role of helping others to know and to follow Jesus. How do I feel about the possibility that I, like Peter, have been called to bring the knowledge of Jesus to other people?

Has there been a particular moment in my life when I realised this? Even possibly, a moment that I have tended to overlook?

What hopes and doubts arise in me as I consider I may also be called to be an active apostle of Jesus?

When you hear the passage again, listen especially to those ideals that Peter feels should inspire those who want to bring others to knowledge of Jesus. Which of those ideals would you particularly want to inspire you in your example to others of a Christian life?

In the last minutes of the prayer, tell God about where, today, you would want to be of help to others in ways that imitate St Peter's ministry of bringing others to Jesus.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.