

CATHOLIC HOMILY

# Homily Transcript

*June 28, 2026*

It truly is amazing and a gift to be here with you all this morning, just a month and like four days after my ordination. It's a gift to be able to come back and celebrate Mass here at St. Peter, the Apostle Parish, on the feast day of the St. Peter and St. Paul. Within those last months, I've been kind of all over the place. I've been here a little bit, but most mostly I've been away. I've been traveling to different parishes to celebrate Mass, but for about a two-week period, I had the privilege and the opportunity to go over to Rome and to visit a city that I've wanted to visit my entire life. Literally, I remember as a kid reading, looking at pictures, and hearing about St.

Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and thinking how it would be amazing to see that in person one day. So it was a gift to go there as a newly ordained priest and to celebrate Mass in beautiful churches and in beautiful and holy places just as a newly ordained priest. And I can't help but reflect and think back on that experience today on the feast day of St. Peter and St. Paul, because Jesus tells Peter, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld will not prevail against it. Nothing will prevent this from happening. And you see that in Rome. When you visit Rome and you visit St. Peter's, you see the tomb of St.

Peter, which is actually directly underneath the altar of St. Peter's Basilica. And it has been there since the year 400, after Christianity was legalized, a temple or a cathedral was built over the tomb of Peter. And so literally, Christ's words became true in a literal sense, that the church was built upon the rock of St. Peter. And so it's just so surreal to see that in person. And what can one say on the feast day of St. Peter and St. Paul? One can say many things. You can talk about their great conversions, you can talk about just their relationship that they had to great saints who are so powerful who are the Apostles of Rome. And you can even speak about their success in their ministry.

But for today, I feel drawn and I felt drawn to speak about an underlying, I guess, belief or underlying teaching that St. Peter and St. Paul preached in word and in action throughout their entire ministry. And that teaching is the idea of rejoicing and weakness. Rejoicing and weakness. I don't know about you, but I actually hate rejoicing and weakness a lot of times. Like when I feel weak, when I feel inadequate, I feel not good. I want to run from that. But the gospel preached by Jesus and continued by Peter and Paul is actually the opposite of that. Our belief as Christians is that we can rejoice in our weakness. And not only can we rejoice, but we should rejoice in our weakness. Because as St.

Paul says, when I am weak, I am actually strong. What that means is when I'm weak, I no longer have the ability to have the false notion that I have everything under control and that I'm doing everything fine.

When you are weak, you have to face the harsh reality that I need help. I need a Savior. I need Jesus. And St. Peter and St. Paul, they both live that in their lives. St. Peter, I love just his character in the Gospels because he's so relatable I think to you and I. You know, Jesus tells the apostles at the Last Supper, you guys all are gonna leave me. And what St. Peter says, he says, not I, Lord, others might leave you, but I would never leave you. I'm too good for that.

That's basically what he was saying. And he had to experience his own weakness when he had to face the reality that actually when push came to shove, he wasn't willing to follow Jesus in that moment. And through that encounter with his weakness, he was able to have this unique personal encounter with the risen Lord at the Sea of Galilee. And from that encounter, he was transformed and we wouldn't have the St. Peter that we celebrate today without his weakness that he had to encounter at the day of the Passion. And St. Paul likewise, right, he persecuted the Christians and he was arrogant. He had to face his weakness when the Lord himself said, why are you persecuting me?

So what does it mean to rejoice in your weakness? It doesn't mean to just be okay with sin. That's not what I'm saying. Hopefully, I'm not preaching heresy a month into ordination. But what rejoicing in our weakness means is to live our faith and to live our life not focused on ourself and not focused on what others think of me. So a helpful way to understand just what not or to help a way to understand what does it mean to rejoice in your weakness is to understand what it's not. So if you're ever living life, if you and I are ever living life under the pretext or the false pretext that if people knew this about me or if my spouse or anyone in my life knew this about me, they wouldn't love me.

That is a lie straight from hell and from the devil himself. That attacks are our pride because we want to hide when we experience our vulnerabilities in our weakness. We want to run. But the reality is that when we present those to the Lord and to the people who really do love us, we are going to be met with love. And for me in my time in seminary, those were the moments in my life that I experienced the greatest conversion.

When I felt called to reveal parts of my heart and parts of my soul that I deemed unlovable, that I thought if this formator or if this spiritual director or this brother or seminarian of mine, if they actually knew this part of my life, they wouldn't love me or they wouldn't look at me the same or if it was really severe, I wouldn't be ordained. And that was just a lie from the devil himself like I said. Because those moments when I was vulnerable and acknowledged areas in my life where I was weak, they were real opportunities for the Lord to enter into my life. And I was able to finally accept the reality that I'm not the Savior and I need Jesus in my life.

And those are personal encounters that we can only have between us and the Lord. And from those encounters, great things can come. And even in today's second reading or in today's first reading, St. Peter is in prison. He's in prison. That seems like a very weak and vulnerable state to be in. But if he was not in prison, he would not have had the encounter with the angel of the Lord to free him from his imprisonment. So even in today's first reading in Peter's life, he experienced the fact that rejoicing and

weakness is a real thing. Because the cause for rejoicing is the fact that Jesus will come and help us in our weakness. And that's the gospel of St. Peter and St. Paul.

And it refutes our tendency to think that we can earn our salvation by ourselves. Now, none of us probably preaches that openly, but it's sometimes intuitively in the water that we live and breathe. That I can save myself. That I can pull myself up from my bootstraps because it's the good American way and I could be saved. But the truth is we can't. The truth is until we know for certain that we can't do this by ourselves, we can't be ready to receive Jesus into our lives more fully and more deeply. And that's actually a heresy. That's the Pelagian heresy. Pelagius was his priest in the fourth century and he taught that salvation comes from ourselves, not from God. That is false.

So today on the feast day of St. Peter and St. Paul, two men who did great things for the Lord and in the church. We have the opportunity to imitate them. To first imitate the fact that we are flesh and blood. That we are weak. But also imitate the way that they responded to their weakness. By running to Jesus time and time again, asking for his help in their ministry and in their life. And if we're faithful to just that, great things can be done with our lives and with our ministry. And great things can be built upon the foundation that we lay. So brothers and sisters, it's just great to be here again with you all this morning. And know of my prayers for you as I go to Our Lady of Lourdes in Pittsburgh.

So starting Wednesday, I'll move down to Pittsburgh, Kansas and I'll begin my ministry there. But may we all seek the intercession of St. Peter and St. Paul to constantly follow Christ in our weakness.