

Peter and Paul

Today is the feast of St Peter and St Paul.

These men had a massive influence on the foundations of our faith. Through their teachings and practice, they had a massive influence on the development of Western Civilisation. Indeed when we consider that a Christian traditions as old as Rome, exist in Ethiopia, in India, and in the Arab world, the true significance of these historical figures is quite staggering.

What is perhaps more staggering is that they both began as failures.

St Peter was almost the fall guy in the Gospel. "Get behind me Satan", "again Peter denieghed it; and at once the cock crew"

Then St Paul the great persecutor of the Church. He had entirely approved of the killing of St Stephen the first martyr. He was actually on his way to persecute the church in Damascus when his dramatic conversion happened.

They had both got it very badly wrong

Never the less upon from these two
a lot of the church and its teaching has emerged.

Failure here seen as part of the development of sanctity.

Failure and reconciliation seen as part of the development of faith.

Failure not simply as weakness, but as a tool used in the liberation of self.

In any classroom there is the challenge getting the sum correct. The parent is pleased, when the child reports getting ten out of ten. But what will the child learn if the results are always perfect. If there were consistent 100% marks then the questions asked are not challenging enough for the child.

The fantastic potential for a greater understanding of the subject, is being denieghed, by a lazy teacher, or a weak syllabus.

If there is no searching. No struggling. No points of failure. Then there is surly little real learning.

Failure is a part of the process of learning.

I suspect that if you have never failed then you have never really tried to move beyond your comfort zone.

If it is worth passing it is worth failing

If it is worth achieving, it is worth losing

Many people are in this modern age judged by apparent success. That is, their character. Their dignity. Their worth, are judged by apparent success. But that is to be blind to the struggle.

If there is nobility, or status in the evidence of success it is to be found in the process of achievement

If there is success then those involved have taken on the challenge of failure

They have dealt with their anxiety

They have generally seen beyond the results

They have got things wrong and not been defeated

Indeed at times they have enjoyed the process

If it is worth passing it is worth failing

If it is worth achieving, it is worth losing

It is in the approach to the crisis that real character is judged

God will not ask the details of your bank balance or "O" level paper results.

God will not ask what you got in geography.

Those who have never failed have never tried

Those who have never tried

have really failed.

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have really failed.

Within the tradition of Christianity,

within the life of St Paul,

within the experience of St Peter

There is the liberation of forgiveness.

There is the witness to the God given capacity to fail,

then

to accept what I am,

and to begin again.

The hardest person to forgive is yourself.

It is OK to fail

Sadly those who will not accept failure, are trapped within their own limitations.

Forgive yourself, accept yourself, and be prepared to fail

Thus take on the challenge

Then in the humility of that freedom

Live forgiven like St Peter

Live forgiven like St Paul

Live in the faith that the Son of God calls you to

Live in the liberation of potential failure