

**“THE ROCK AND THE CHOSEN VESSEL”**

**It is fitting that our Church chooses to honor her two greatest Apostles on the same Day. PETER, whose missionary labors centered on winning converts from Judaism, is often referred as the “rock” because of his strong, firm faith. It was Peter, who boldly proclaimed his belief that Jesus was “the Son of the living God” in response to Christ’s direct question: “And who do you say I Am?” PAUL, who concentrated his ministry on taking the Gospel to the Gentiles – those who were not Jews – is commonly called the “CHOSEN VESSEL” of Christ’s Church. Paul, in his own words, “labored more than any other Apostle.” Through his tireless preaching the early Church grew and expanded at a rapid rate.**

**It must be said, however, that BOTH of these Apostles once fell woefully short of living up to the accolades they now receive. We might even consider them to have been dismal failures in their early years! Despite his boasting, Peter’s faith was weak. Remember how he tried to walk on the sea as Christ did, only to sink when his fears overcame his faith? Who could ever forget the shameful way he thrice denied that he even knew who Jesus was? In his own youth, Paul had no intention of winning souls for Christ. On the contrary, we know that he aggressively persecuted those who professed to be Christians, personally being responsible for the arrest and conviction of many believers.**

**Sts. Peter and Paul were both touched by the Lord and became changed men. They became totally committed to their divine commission. Nothing short of martyrdom was able to prevent them from carrying the message of the Saviour that they loved to all parts of the known world.**

**In one of his sermons, St. John Chrysostom calls Sts. Peter and Paul “. . . true pillars of The Church and the foundation and trumpets of the divine teaching of Christ.” These words truly capture and define the significance these saints played in the life of the Church.**