

Pope Shenouda III series

7

***THE TWO SAINTS
PETER & PAUL***

***(ON THE FEAST'S DAY OF THE APOSTLES
WHICH IS THEIR FEAST)***

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ALL THE PREDICATION OF SAINT MARK***

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His Holiness Pope Shenouda III
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Predication of the Evangelist St. Mark

The feast of the the apostles (5 Abib) is the feast of the martyrdom of S. Peter & S. Paul.

I shall talk to you about them, not as regards History, but as a spiritual life which can be a lesson.

What were the points of resemblance, and the points of difference in their lives? and how God had chosen these two kinds for the building up of His kingdom?

Both are two apostles, and martyrs. Each of them has his own style. But both the two styles were for the glory of God.

Pope Shenouda III

PREFACE

On the occasion of the feast of the apostles, I had wished to talk to you about the apostles in a general manner. But I have found that this is greater than to be contained in a summary pamphlet like this one.

So I preferred to write for you only about these two great apostles: S. Peter & S. Paul; especially that the feast of the apostles (5 Abib) is the feast of the martyrdom of S. Peter & S. Paul.

As for the talk about our fathers the apostles in a general manner, there will be a special pamphlet for that, later on, if the Lord permits and we live.

And believe me, a single pamphlet is not enough even for our limitation only to these two apostles, but we shall talk very briefly.

We do not write History in this pamphlet, because History would need volumes, and researches, and maps....

But I shall write to you here about the spiritual lessons and not about History.

That is what we can learn, as much as it is possible, from the lives of the apostles. If we turn to History, it will be in a secondary manner.

*On the occasion of the feast of the apostles
Pope Shenouda III*

The Church celebrates the memory of the martyrdom of these two saints on the 5th of Abib, which is the 12th of July. This feast is called in our Church by the name of "the feast of the apostles". Its date is unchanged in every year.

The Church venerates these two apostles very profoundly; and praises them and honors them exceedingly; especially in the prayer of "the partition" or "the division" which pertains to the feast of the apostles and to the feast of the apostles, which we pray during the holy mass.

Although there are not many churches which are called by their two names together, there is a church which is called by their two names in the region of Amba Roueiss in Cairo, and another church which is called by their two names in Los Angeles, California, USA.

These two saints represent two distinguished kinds as regards the personality, the mission, and the style. Each one of them has distinct characteristics.

THE POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

Peter was among the first whom the Lord had chosen to work with Him (Matt. 10).

And Paul was not among the twelve, and not even among the seventy apostles, but the Lord chose him lastly, after the resurrection and years after the choice of Matthias.....

He did not follow Christ during His predication on earth. He rather said about that: "Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor. 15: 8-9).

And although he was the last in his call, yet he "laboured more abundantly than they all" (1 Cor. 15:10). That shows that it is not a matter of precedence, but according to the amount of weariness from exertion for God.

A person may not be the most ancient among the workers in ministry, and nevertheless he may be the strongest of all the workers.

John the Baptist was not the first prophet in the Old Testament, but he was the last of them in their chronological order. Nevertheless it was said that "among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11:11).

St. Augustin said to the Lord: "I have been very much late to love You". And with his lateness, he was more profound than millions who had preceded him.

Peter was born in Bethsaide, and his family lived in Capernaum (Kafr Nahum).

Paul was born in Tarsus of Cilicia. He went to Jerusalem in the early years of his youth to complete his religious instruction, in order to study the Law at the hands of one of the great teachers" (Acts 22:3).

The apostle Peter was a married man. It was mentioned in the Gospel that Christ healed his step-mother from fever (Matt. 8: 14-15). In his journeys for the predication, he wandered accompanied by his wife as a sister (1 Cor. 9:5).

But the apostle Paul was a virgin. (1 Cor. 7:7).

He called for the preference of virginity. "But each one has his own gift from God", "as the Lord has called each one..... Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called" (1 Cor. 7: 7,17,20).

That proves that the Lord calls everybody to His service, whether they are married like Peter, or virgins like Paul.

Peter began his life with the Lord Christ with love, confidence, and faith. But on the contrary: Paul began by enmity, as a persecutor of the Church and of everyone who followed Christ, so that the Lord, when He met him on the road to Damascus, began his conversation with him by reprimanding him saying: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4).

Saint Peter was a simple man, a fisherman (Matt. 4:18). He was ignorant and was not instructed into culture or science. He is one of whom "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise" (1 Cor. 27). It was said of him, of him and saint John, "that they were uneducated and untrained men" (Acts 4:13).

But saint Paul was one of the learned of his age, who was educated at the University of Tarsus, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). He was well-known for his culture and for reading many books. (Acts 26:24).

That shows us that the Lord equally employs everybody for His kingdom, the learned and the simple. The important thing for them is to be useful utensils for the work of His grace.....

There was also a distinction in the mission of each of the two saints Peter and Paul.

The apostle Peter began his ministry while he was old-aged. Perhaps he was the oldest of all the apostles. Therefore they venerated his old age. As regards age, he said about saint Mark: "Mark my son " (1 Peter 5:13).

But saint Paul was smaller than saint Peter in age.

Also among the points of difference: the apostle Paul formed for himself disciples in a greater number than Peter did.

Among his disciples were Timothy and Titus to whom he sent epistles.

Also among his disciples, were Luke, Aristarchus, Tichycus, Carpus, the deaconess Phebe, Achilla and Priscilla.....and others.

Mark followed both of them: first he followed Peter, then he remained with Paul to the end of his life (2 Tim. 4:11).

It was said about saint Peter that he was "the apostle of circumcision"

He was confided in "the gospel of circumcision", that is the predication to the Jews; while ***Paul was confided in "the Gospel of uncircumsion"***, that is the predication to the Gentiles.

Such is what the apostle saint Paul said: "the gospel of the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter, for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles" (Gal. 2: 7-8).

The Lord said to Paul: "Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21). And He also said to him: "for as you testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome" (Rom.23:11).

Paul wrote an epistle to the Romans, and some epistles to the churches of the Gentiles.

Peter wrote to the Jews "the pilgrims of the Dispersion" (1 Peter 1:1).

Saint Paul wrote 14 epistles which consisted of 100 chapters.

Saint Peter wrote only two epistles which consisted of 8 chapters.

Saint Peter was simple in his writings.

As for saint Paul, saint Peter said about his epistles "in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16).

Saint Paul talked about theological questions like the justification, the renovation, Law and grace, the baptism, the priesthood, choice and rejection, living as Jews matters which saint Peter did not approach.

Saint Peter was impulsive.

That was probably because of his great zeal, or his jealousy. The Lord praised him when he testified of Him that He is the Son of the living God (Matt. 16: 15:19).

But many times the Lord reprimanded him for his impulsiveness.

Such as when He reprimanded him afterwards, when the Lord was talking about his future sufferings and His killing by the Jews. Then Peter said impetuously: "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to you! Then the Lord rebuked him saying: "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men"(Matt. 16: 21:23).

Peter also was impulsive during the Lord's washing of His apostles' feet. He refused and "said to Him: You shall never wash my feet!" But when "Jesus answered him: "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me. Simon Peter said to Him: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head"..... (John 13: 8-10).

Another time when the Lord Christ was arrested, Peter "having a sword", impulsively "drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. So, Jesus said to Peter: "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" (John 18: 10-11). And He also said to him: "for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt. 26: 51,52).

Thus we see that the Lord has chosen him in spite of his impulsiveness, then He has transformed this impulsiveness into good since the day of the Pentecost.

Then we see Peter beginning to speak in that day, and he explained what was happening to the people (Acts 2), and he called them to faith. He also began to speak on the day of the healing of the lame, and rebuked the Jews because they had preferred a murderer to the Lord Christ, before Pilate (Acts 3:12-26).

He came forward in many occasions, as when he said: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Act 5:29).

Thus the Lord employed the impulsiveness of Peter for the good.

As for saint Paul, he was also enthusiastic, but without impulsiveness.....

Because of the difference in their style of work, saint Paul once reprimanded saint Peter himself:

He explained this in the second chapter of his epistle to the Galatians saying: "Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And

the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all: "If you being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?" (Gal. 2: 11-14).

Nevertheless the two saints participated together and resembled each other in substantial matters like zeal and martyrdom.

POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE

Both were Jews.

The apostle Paul mentioned that he was a Jew, from the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5).

The Bible did not mention from which tribe was the apostle Peter.

Both were called by the Lord.

Peter was "casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them: [Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. They immediately left their nets and followed Him" (Matt. 4: 18-20).

The Lord called ***Paul*** as "he journeyed to Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground" (Acts 9: 1--4), and the Lord called him, sending him first to Ananias of Damascus.

And as the Lord Jesus-Christ called him, also the Holy Spirit called him, and said: "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

Likewise also God the Father called him. The apostle saint Paul said about that: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me" (Gal. 1: 15-17).

Thus we see that the apostle saint Paul was called by the three Persons, each separately.

Although both the saint apostles Peter and Paul were likewise called by God, yet the manner of the call was different; and also the number of the calls.

The Lord changed the name of each of them:

Peter was called Simeon, son of Jonah (John 21:15). The Lord called him by the name of Peter. (Matt. 16: 17-18).

The name of Saul was changed into Paul. At the beginning of his call, the Lord called him by the name of Saul (Acts 9:4). During his predication, He called him by the name of Paul (Acts 23:11).

The Holy Spirit came upon each of them; and each of them spoke with tongues.

It is evident that the apostle Peter spoke languages on the day of Pentecost, for the Spirit of the Lord had come upon him. The apostle Paul said in his epistle to the Corinthians: "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all" (1 Cor. 14:18). And it was said in the story of Elymas the sorcerer: "Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said....." (Acts 13:9).

Each of them had the power to give the Holy Spirit.

It was said about Peter and John, that the apostles who were in Jerusalem, sent them to Samaria when it believed: "Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17).

It was likewise said about the apostle Paul that after the baptism of the Ephesians "when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19: 5-6).

Each of them made wonders and miracles.

It was said about the apostle Paul: "Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:11).

Each of them raised up a dead.

The apostle Peter resuscitated from death "a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas". He "prayed. And turning to the body he said: Tabitha, arise". And she opened her eyes Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up and presented her alive" (Acts 9: 36-41).

The apostle Paul resuscitated from death "a certain young man named Euthychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead." But Paul resuscitated him. "And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted" (Acts 20: 7-12).

Each of them was a flame of energy, holy zeal, and work of predication.

Each of them preached and taught, and made efforts in the ministry.

Since the day of the Pentecost, Peter taught and preached, and testified to the resurrection of the Lord Christ, in the temple and outside the temple. He preached in Jerusalem, in Lydda, and in Joppa (Acts 9: 22,31). He moved from Joppa to Cesarea where he admonished and baptised Cornelius and those who were with him (Acts 10). He also preached the Jews of the Dispersion, and sent to them an epistle "To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1).

The apostle saint Paul "laboured more abundantly than they (the apostles) all" (1 Cor. 15:10). Therefore we shall select a special chapter for him.

Each of them was bold and courageous in his predication.

It is enough as regards the apostle Peter that he insisted upon his predication, and did not care about the threatening by the Jews, but said his famous expression: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

He rather rebuked the Jews saying: "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life" (Acts 3: 13-15).

The apostle saint Paul was very courageous before the governors.

It is that the governor Felix was terrified before him, who was a captive, "as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgement to come" (Acts 24:25). And when he stood before the king Agrippa during his trial, he said to him: "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe". Then Agrippa said to Paul: "You almost persuade me to become a Christian". And Paul said: "I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains" (Acts 26: 27-29).

Because of the courage of saint Paul, [as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by: "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying: "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman"] And when the commander heard this, he was "afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had

bound him". "Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him" (Acts 22: 25-29).

Because of the courage of saint Paul, when the governor Festus wanted to deliver him to the Jews to kill him, he said: "I stand at Caesar's judgement seat, where I ought to be judged For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar. Then Festus answered: "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!" (Acts 25: 10-12).

Each of the two saints Peter and Paul was firm in his punishment of the sinners.

We touch this in the punishment by saint Peter of Ananias and Sapphira when they "kept back part of the proceeds" of their sold possession and lied to the Holy Spirit; then Peter said to Ananias: "You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:4). Then Ananias "fell down and breathed his last". And when his wife Sapphira repeated the same lie, saint Peter said to her: ["How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out". Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last] (Acts 5:9).

This firmness was necessary, in order for the Church not to begin with negligence and indifference. Therefore it was said afterwards: "So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things" (Acts 5:11).

This punishment confirms the amount of power which God granted to that saint apostle.

Another example is the position of saint Peter as regards Simeon the sorcerer.

This one was astonished that "through the laying of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money" to obtain the same gift!

"But Peter said to him (with firmness and authority): "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity" (Acts 8: 18-22).

The apostle Paul also acted with every firmness with the sinner of Corinth.

That one who had fallen into the sin of adultery with his father's wife. When the apostle Paul heard about this, he sent to them saying: "I

indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus". And he reprimanded the people and said to them: "put away from yourselves the evil person" (1 Cor. 5: 3-5, 13). This firmness had its effect for the repentance of that sinner and for the holy zeal of the people.

Another example of the firmness of saint Paul, is his position as regards Elymas the sorcerer.

("For so his name is translated")

The apostle "Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him", rebuked him and said: "now indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time. And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand" (Acts 13: 6-11).

This event indicates also the authority which God granted to that saint apostle. And it happened as he said.

In spite of all this, the two saint apostles were humble.

At the beginning of the Lord's call of Peter, in the miracle of the catching of fish, we read that after the miracle that "he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8).

The tradition informs us that during his martyrdom and crucifixion, he asked to be crucified head down because of his feeling of his sins, and not to be crucified as the Lord

The apostle Paul, in spite of all his fights in preaching, in spite of his numerous miracles, we see him write to this disciple Timotheus saying: "although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13). And he says in his first epistle to the Corinthians about the appearances of the Lord: "Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor. 15: 8-9).

The examples and proofs of the humility of these two great apostles are very numerous, and it is not the appropriate time for them, in this summary pamphlet.....

Each of them was exposed to many persecutions.

Saint Peter was persecuted together with the rest of the apostles at the beginning of Christianity. "the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them" (Acts 4:1). They arrested them, then they

let them go. They conferred among themselves to kill them; were it not for the intervention of the Law teacher Gamaliel (Acts 5: 32-40).

They scourged them and "commanded them that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41).

Saint Peter suffered scourging for Christ, and likewise also he was confined to jail.

Herod arrested him to please the Jews, and "he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover" (Acts 12: 3-4).

But the angel of the Lord delivered Peter that night, and brought him out of prison.....

As for Paul, how numerous are the persecutions which happened to him and to his participants in the ministry!?

He said about this: "But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in sleeplessness, in fastings (2 Cor. 6: 4-5).

"We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal body. For we who live are always delivered to death" (2Cor. 4: 8-11).

He has explained in (2 Cor. 11) a summary of his sufferings. He said:

"in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in peril of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness".

Each of the saints Peter and Paul obtained the crown of martyrdom.

Each of them ended his life as a martyr in the year 67 AD at the hands of the ceasar Neron.

The apostle saint Peter was crucified head down.

The apostle saint Paul was beheaded with the sword.

The apostle saint Peter

He has three names: Simon the son of Jonah, Cephas, and Peter.

He and his brother Andrew were fishermen. His brother knew Christ before him.

Simon began his acquaintance with Christ by way of his brother Andrew.

It was mentioned in the gospel of John about Andrew:

"He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him: "We have found the Messiah (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said: "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas [which is translated, (Peter,) A Stone] (John 1: 40-42). We note that the three names came in a single verse.

Simon Peter became the first name among the twelve (Matt. 10:2).

Rather he became one of three who were very near to the Lord Christ.

They are Peter, James, and John, whom He took to the mount of the Transfiguration, and "His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light" (Matt. 17: 1,2); and they saw with Him Moses and Elijah talking to Him.....

The Lord took these three with Him in the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus from death. The gospel of Mark says about that: "And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James" (Mark 5:37).

These three are also those whom He took with Him to the garden of Gethsemany, in His agony before the crucifixion. The gospel of Matthew says about that: "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee...." (Matt. 26:37).

Hence, Peter, James and John had a certain familiarity by Christ.

Therefore the apostle Paul considers Peter to be one of the three pillars of the church in the days of the apostles.....

He says: "and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcision" (Gal. 2:9).

The apostle saint Peter loved the Lord Christ very much.

He loved His words and His instruction. Accordingly when some disciples returned back; and the Lord [said to the twelve: "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6: 66-68).

His love for Him was manifested in his words on Maundy-Thursday night.

When the Lord said to His disciples: "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night", Peter with his well-known impulsiveness answered and said to Him: "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You" (Matt. 26: 31-35). "I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death" (Luke 22:33).

Verily, he denied Him three times, but out of weakness, and not out of lack of love.

A proof of this is that when the rooster crew, "he went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75). Another proof is that he answered the Lord after the resurrection: "You know that I love you" (John 21: 17). The Lord accepted his repentance, and established him in his apostleship and said to him: "Feed My lambs", "Tend My sheep" (John 21: 15,16).

The apostle Peter manifested great courage and boldness after the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The first chapters of the book of the Acts of the Apostles are nearly centered about the two apostles Peter and John; and narrate to us what they did in the building of the first Church, before the appearance of the apostle Paul.

We do not forget the strength of the apostle Peter in exhortation:

The effect of his sermon on the day of the Pentecost, which drew to faith nearly three thousand men who "were cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37), and were baptised; and likewise his sermon after the healing of the lame (Acts 3); and his courageous standing before all the chiefs and the priests of the Jews; and his unrestricted manifestation of his faith.

It is evident that he could recall from memory the psalms and the verses of the Bible.

He mentioned them in his profound interpretations. For example: what he said about Judas (Acts 1: 16-20); what he said on the day of the Pentecost; his quotation of what came in the book of the prophet Joel (Acts 2: 16-21); other quotations from the book of the Psalms (Acts :24-30) all this in consequent verses. Add to this what he said

on the day of the healing of the lame, and his quotation of the sayings of the prophets (Acts 3: 21-25).

The apostle Peter is astonishing in his recalling from memory of the verses of the Bible, and their use.

Examples of this are numerous. That is not the time to count them.

We find the same situation in his two epistles which he wrote. It is the style of a man who filled with the spirit of the Bible, and with the soundness of the explanation of the words. He said: "knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21).

It was he who said: "I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder, that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets...." (2 Peter 3: 1-2).

The apostle saint Paul

He is one of the giant capacities of ministry

As soon as he entered into faith, the Lord employed him for the building of the kingdom, and he worked by his action.

The book of the Acts of the Apostles begins by mentioning the work of the twelve, and specially Peter and John.

After mentioning Paul, nearly the rest of the book is occupied with this great apostle, specially after the council of Jerusalem.

He "laboured more abundantly than they all" (1 Cor. 15:10), he enjoyed gifts and revelations, and ascended to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12: 2-7).

He suffered from every body for the predication (2 Cor. 11).

He preached in all the great apostolic churches.

He served much in ***Jerusalem and in Antioch***. He founded ***the churches of Greece, as well as the church of Rome***, where he stayed for two years preaching "the kingdom of God with all confidence, no one forbidding him" (Acts 28: 30-31).

He was tired on the land and at sea, preaching in three voyages, in Asia, Europe, till he arrived west to Spain where he founded its church.

He served in many islands: in Cyprus, Crete, Malta, Sicilia, and he founded their churches.

In Asia, he preached in Jerusalem, Tyr, Cesarea, Antioch, Ephesus, Meletis, and some cities in Minor Asia....

In Europe, he preached in Cyprus, Greece, Macedonia, Philippi, Thessalonique, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Troas, Rome and many cities in Italy.

He spoke in the Temple and the synagogues, and in the houses, and in the Areopagus, and the temples and possibly in every place.

He was exposed to many false accusations from the Jews; he stood before governors, and kings, as Felix, Festus, Agrippa, Ceasar, and the council of the Sanhedrim.

He was imprisoned and captive many times: in Philippi, Cesarea, and twice in Rome

He wrote much.

He wrote fourteen epistles. Two of the evangelists are his disciples, they are Mark and Luke. Also among his disciples there are Aristarchus, Timotheus, Titus, and others.

He was surnamed the apostle of the Gentiles:

The Lord said to him: "I will send you far from here to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21), "as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome" (Acts 23:11).

He obtained the crown of martyrdom by being beheaded at the hands of Neron in the year 67 AD. And he obtained the crown of virginity, and the crown of apostleship, and the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8).

May the blessing of his prayers be with us all.

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S DISCIPLES

1. Saint Timotheus:

to whom the apostle Paul wrote two epistles.

The apostle Paul ordained him bishop of Ephesus. He reminded him with the laying of his hands upon him. He was the assistant of saint Paul in many of his voyages. He went to Philippi (Philippi 2: 19-20); to Corinth (2 Cor. 1:1), to Macedonia (Acts 19:22), and likewise he went to Rome (Heb. 13:23).

He was very active in ministry in spite of the sickness of his stomach and his "frequent infirmities" (1Tim. 5:23).

He began his service from his youth, so that saint Paul said to him: "Let no one despise your youth" (1 Tim. 4:12). He was helped by his

knowledge since his childhood of holy books, his origin in a saint family and specially his mother and his grandmother (Lois and Eunice).

2. Titus:

He is one of the disciples of the apostle Paul to whom he wrote an epistle. He ordained him bishop of Crete He called him his son (Titus 1:4), as he called also Timotheus his son (1 Tim.1:18). He accompanied the apostle in some of his journeys, and went with him to Nicopolis and Delmatia. The saint sent him to Corinth, and left him to arrange the matter of pastorship, and to ordinate priests, in Crete.

3. Tychicus:

One of the disciples of the apostle Paul. He sent him to Ephesus (Eph. 6:21), and to Colosse (Co;. 4:7). He was among the most united sons to him. He mentioned in some of his epistles. (Titus 3:12), (2 Tim. 4:12).

The rest of Paul's disciples:

Those who loved saint Paul, and whom he mentioned in his epistles, are many, as for example it was mentioned in (Rom. 16).....

Among his well-known disciples: Aristarchus whose name he once mentioned before the evangelist Luke (Philemon 23), and he described him as his fellow labourer.

Among the disciples of Paul also, Epaphras (Philemon 22), and also the apostle Mark, the evangelist Luke, and others.....