

ST PETER

Saint Peter, also known as Simon Peter, was an early Christian leader and one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, according to the New Testament and Christian tradition. Peter is featured prominently in the New Testament Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles and is venerated as a saint by the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and Oriental Orthodoxy. The son of John or of Jonah or Jona, he was from the village of Bethsaida in the province of Galilee or Gaulanitis. His brother Andrew was also an apostle. Peter is venerated in multiple churches and is regarded as the Catholic Church's first pope. He is credited with establishing the church in Antioch and presiding for seven years as the leader of that city's Christian community. Either in person or via epistle, his words reached Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia Minor and Bithynia where they were received by scattered communities of believers: Jews, Hebrew Christians and Gentiles. He then went to Rome where in the second year of Claudius, it is claimed, he overthrew Simon Magus and held the Sacerdotal Chair for 25 years.

Two general epistles are ascribed to Peter. The Gospel of Mark was traditionally thought to show the influence of Peter's preaching and eyewitness memories. According to New Testament accounts, Peter was one of twelve apostles chosen by Jesus from his first disciples. Originally a fisherman, he was assigned a leadership role and was with Jesus during events witnessed by only a few apostles, such as the Transfiguration. According to the New Testament, Peter confessed Jesus as the Messiah, was part of Jesus' inner circle, walked on water, witnessed Jesus' transfiguration, denied Jesus, was restored by Jesus, and preached on the day of Pentecost.

Peter is said to have been crucified under Emperor Nero Augustus Caesar. It is traditionally held that he was crucified upside down at his own request, since he saw himself unworthy to be crucified in the same way as Jesus Christ. Catholic tradition holds that Saint Peter's site of crucifixion is located in the Clementine Chapel, while his mortal bones and remains are contained in the underground Confessio of St. Peter's Basilica, where Pope Paul VI announced the excavated discovery of a first-century Roman cemetery in 1968. Every June 29 since 1969, a statue of Saint Peter has been crowned in St. Peter's Basilica with a papal tiara, ring of the fisherman, and papal vestments, as part of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Here in St Peter we celebrate Petertide with a special service, concert or Flower Festival.

