

# 1 PETER 1:1-2

*<sup>1</sup> Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*

*To God's elect, exiles, scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with His blood:*

*Grace and peace be yours in abundance.*

**T**o be a Christian is to be marked out as 'different'. In his First Letter the apostle Peter writes to an exiled people, communities who are living as strangers and foreigners in Asia Minor. These people knew what it was like to be alien in their society – harassed and rejected.

But Peter is also writing to a people who are exiled in a different sense: as Christians, we spend our lives on Earth in exile, separated from our eternal home in Heaven with the Father.

To be a Christian is to have been given a different identity to others: rather than defining ourselves according to our family, our nationality, how much money we have, or any of the other things we sometimes think make us who we are, we, the baptised, are 'in Christ', a deep truth which is both given and yet to be fully realised. We are called to find our identity solely in the person of Jesus Christ.

Peter speaks to those who are exiled but chosen by God. These communities may be reviled on Earth, but they are sanctified – made holy – by the Spirit. Christians are a people who do not consider earthly powers and leaders to be the ultimate source of authority: we are obedient to Jesus.

All this is only made possible by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

As we pray fervently for others to turn their hearts and minds for Christ, let us start by asking: how do we live in a way that marks us out as different? Does our witness make people curious about faith, rather than resistant to it? How do I live my life differently because of the Good News of Jesus Christ, and how do others see and hear that?

Peter speaks to real communities facing real problems, but he greets them in the light of God's abundant grace and peace. May you bring that grace and peace to all you meet as you begin this journey today.