

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. ✠

The confession of St. Peter is immediately connected to the failure of St. Peter. What flesh and blood did not reveal to him was easily dismissed by flesh and blood. The same man who confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living GOd, turns around and, without hardly taking a breath, speaks for Satan.

The failure is as important as the confession. It shows us why Jesus must be the Christ, because Peter's mind, like all of ours, turns again and again to the things of man. Peter needs redemption. So also, does Peter need constant catechesis in the things of God; the things of man are avoiding pain, increasing pleasure, and seeking glory. The things of man include a constant fight for an advantage over our neighbors, increased wealth and luxury. But the things of God, that which Peter and we all should ponder, are the Son of man, the Christ suffering many things, being rejected, being killed, and after 3 days rising again.

We need constant catechesis on these things because they are not natural to us in our current state. Our flesh rallies against them and seeks an easier way.

Peter, like all of us, rightly discerned that the things of God are not only bad for Jesus but they would be bad also for him. The student is not above the teacher; the way Jesus will go is the way His disciples will go. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter will try to get Jesus to stay put, to avoid the cross and exodus out of this world. So it is that, having just made the confession that Jesus is the Christ, Peter thinks Jesus is being foolish, that there is a better and easier way.

There is no easier way; this is what it takes for God the Father to win back the world from the devil. There is no easier way for us either; the things of men always betray us, they cannot satisfy us, they devolve quickly into idolatry. The commandments are given to us to rebuke and to teach us. We need to be constantly reminded of what is good because we do not know what is good. We want to worship ourselves; we are obsessed with our needs. We think it must be good to take care of ourselves, that we have a right to happiness, to comfort, to health. We think we are owed certain things.

Thus, we find myriad ways to excuse ourselves to pretend we are not hurting anyone or that really there is no choice or that somehow our sins, our inwardly turned selfishness is just.

The law teaches us again and again that we do not need to take care of ourselves. We should trust God; He will take care of us. We should stop our idolatry. He has promised to take care of us, and He will. In the law, we learn it is good not to take care of ourselves, but instead it is good to take care of others. To give ourselves and our stuff away.

Our Lord Jesus Christ does not call us to our best life now; he calls us to the cross. The purpose of life is not to live long or maximize pleasure. The purpose of life is to know God, to praise Him, to live in and by His grace, to be content with what he gives, and to learn to trust that He works all things together for good.

The purpose of life is to be in fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Apart from that, there is no good.

The story of Jesus Christ is not a tragedy. It is a love story. The things of God are the bloody, stinking temple, where God allows men to be purified so that they might come into His presence with their petitions and His praise. Do you not know that Jesus must be among His Father's things?

The things of God are a ram caught in the thicket who dies instead of Isaac, they are a virgin and old lady conceiving sons who will both be martyred. A sword that pierces the sword to let the idolatry out and the Holy Spirit in. The things of God are the Lord's exodus from the world by means of the cross. This is what Moses and Elijah ponder and contemplate in their glory; this is what makes the holy angels sing, the way that God loves the world. This is what Satan protests against.

The Lord goes to the cross without any bitterness or regret. He is pleased to obey his father and win us back for himself. By this, he reveals himself to us according to his true nature, his mercy. That we might confess with Peter and the whole Church, that he is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

He is not the Christ we deserve, but he is most certainly the Christ that we need.

✠ In Jesus' name. Amen. ✠