

## 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 30, 2020

The “Rock” becomes “Satan”

Poor Peter! Last week we heard how he had a dramatic revelation and confession of Jesus as “the Christ/Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Because of this, Jesus calls him “blessed” and gives him a new name. He is no longer to be called Simon but “Peter” which means “rock.” Not only that, now Jesus appoints Peter the Chief Minister in the Kingdom Church which Jesus is founding. Peter seems to be riding the crest of a wave!

But almost immediately Peter plummets into the trough. When Jesus reveals what being the Messiah entails – that He must undergo great suffering and death before being raised – Peter is shocked and, thinking in very human terms, takes Jesus aside to admonish Him. *“God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.”*

This elicits a strong response from Jesus: *“Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are thinking not as God does, but as humans do.”*

Peter goes from being named “Rock” to being called “Satan”! From being the one upon whom Jesus will build His Church, to being a stumbling block to Jesus’ mission.

Peter's thinking was human thinking; Jesus' thinking was Divine. Peter thought that Jesus had come for him and the Jewish people; Jesus came for the whole of humanity. Peter wanted liberation from Roman oppression; Jesus came to give liberation from the oppression of sin. Peter wanted prestige; Jesus offered him self-denial. Peter wanted to gain worldly rewards; Jesus offered him a cross and eternal salvation. *"For what will it profit anyone to gain the whole world but forfeit their life [soul]."*

Peter and the other apostles did not really understand what discipleship involved when they signed on. Christ is strongly disabusing them of their false expectations. But what of our expectations? Do we understand what it means to be a disciple of Christ; to be a Christian? Or are we more like Peter?

Do we expect that our following of Christ will make this life easier, more carefree? Or do we expect our following of Christ will involve picking up our own cross and following Him; following Him up the terrible road to Calvary before it leads to resurrection and glory. "No cross, no crown."

Abraham did not become 'our Father in faith' [Eucharistic Prayer I] without decades of obedience, frustration and patient trust. The patriarch Joseph did not become vizier to the Pharaoh without first suffering loss of family, country, and freedom. David did not become the King of Israel without first becoming a hunted fugitive. All generations did not call Mary blessed without a sword of sorrow first piercing her soul (Luke 2:35). The apostles did not preach the Good

News without giving their lives. Christianity never reached around the world without persecutions.

Why then should it go better for you and me? Our faith does not promise us an easy life of health, wealth and no suffering. But it does promise us that whatever happens, wherever Christ leads us, He also goes with us.

And in the end, if we persevere in faith, *“presenting [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God”* (Rom. 12:1), not being *“conformed to this world but being transformed by the renewing of your minds”* in order to discern and do the will of God, then we shall share in His eternal glory.

Amen.