



Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

What do we have in common with **Simon Peter**?

More, perhaps, than we think, or would even be keen to admit... Simon Peter is a great witness to the imperfec-

tion of the disciple, but perhaps even more so to the disciple's experience of the love of God.

Peter is weak. And I guess we are weak, or at least I know I am.

Peter struggles to get it right, to the point that Jesus says to him "Get behind me Satan", rebuking him for His inability to grasp the will of God. Peter is angry, violent even – cutting off the ear of the High Priest's servant, Malchus. He's cowardly and lacking in faith in the face of trial and testing for Jesus, running away like most of the other disciples, avoiding the conflict that comes with being associated with Jesus, with having faith in Jesus, and at a crucial moment, when he has the ideal opportunity to stand up and be counted, Peter denies he even knows our Lord.

What I love about Simon Peter, this great Saint, this Prince of the Apostles, this first Pope of God's Holy Catholic Church, is that he is brutally and unashamedly human – imperfect, weak, prone to make huge mistakes, and yet he still has a big heart for God. He wants to do the right thing, he wants to follow Jesus even to death, and yet his weaknesses so often get the better of him.

Arguably the most beautiful thing we see in Peter's life, and the greatest hope we are given through him, is evidenced in the passage we've just heard... Three times Peter denies Jesus, and now, three times Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him. Jesus allows Peter to make up for his unfaithfulness, He invites him into His reconciling embrace. He gives Peter the opportunity for everything to be all right again. And the beautiful thing is, that Jesus does exactly the same for us... No matter how often we fall, how many mistakes we make, how frequently we stray from the path, the opportunity is always there to come back, and to be with Him just as we were from the outset – nothing held against us, just loved by Him, just welcomed by Him, just embraced by the mercy that knows no limits for the repentant sinner. This is the unconditional love that we all seek in our lives – the total and generous embrace of God, and the warmth of His Heart – who despite our infidelity, remains ever faithful, and who despite our weakness remains strong in love and mercy.

St. Peter, pray for us!

Have a Blessed 3rd Sunday of Easter 2025!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza,

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