

June 29

FOR THE FEAST OF SAINT PETER

139.1 First Point

It should not be surprising that Saint Peter was so dearly loved by Jesus Christ and that Our Lord established him as head of his Church.⁶⁵² It was his great faith that won for him this honor, the faith which led him to renounce all things to follow Jesus Christ⁶⁵³ and to give himself completely to him. It is true, as Saint Jerome says, that Saint Peter gave up little if we consider what he possessed: he left only a fishing boat and some nets. But if we pay attention to the fact that he gave up at the same time the desire to possess anything, he did indeed give up much, as this saint observes, because he renounced what is most important in this world, what is most capable of attracting and absorbing people's hearts.

It was the faith with which he was already filled that enabled him to make this generous act. Since Jesus Christ was then just a common man in the eyes of the world without any acclaim, nothing but a strong faith could have enabled anyone to leave everything in order to follow him, because to all appearances there was nothing to be hoped for from him.

Have you truly renounced everything with all your heart's desire? Have you put yourself under the protection of God alone with an entire abandonment to his Providence? Make this generous act in imitation of Saint Peter and through his intercession.

139.2 Second Point

His great faith led this holy apostle to follow Jesus Christ always. Of the three who were with Jesus Christ in the principal occurrences of his life, he is named first in the holy Gospel.⁶⁵⁴ He is also the first of all the apostles to go to the sepulchre looking for the body of his beloved Master,⁶⁵⁵ which illustrates the great attachment he felt for him. His faith shone out above all the other apostles so strongly that when Jesus questioned them to learn what people were thinking about him, and then asked them what they themselves thought of him, Saint Peter, enlightened as he was from above, as Jesus Christ declared, by a light incomprehensible to the human mind, and which could come to him only from heaven, replied: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!⁶⁵⁶ This led Jesus Christ to entrust to him the care of his Church.

Be convinced that you will contribute to the good of the Church in your ministry only insofar as you have the fullness of faith and are guided by the spirit of faith, which is the spirit of your state and by which you should be animated.

139.3 Third Point

Another effect of Saint Peter's extraordinary faith was that as soon as all the apostles had received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, he preached with so much energy and with so much power that an innumerable multitude of those present from all kinds of nations, hearing him speak each in his own native tongue,⁶⁵⁷ were so amazed by what he told them (although he spoke in very simple terms) that 3000 of them were converted on the spot⁶⁵⁸ and embraced the faith of Jesus Christ. A few days later, 5000 more⁶⁵⁹ did the same. It was also this great faith of Saint Peter which enabled him to perform such a great number of miracles, which made his words effective, and enabled even his shadow to heal the sick.⁶⁶⁰

Do you have a faith that is such that it is able to touch the hearts of your students and inspire them with the Christian spirit? This is the greatest miracle you could perform and the one that God asks of you, for this is the purpose of your work.

De La Salle meditates on Saint Peter as a model of faith, and in the following meditation on Saint Paul as a model of zeal, because he wanted to associate the double spirit of his Institute with these two great saints of the Church. Both saints are now celebrated on June 29.

652 Mt 16:15-19

653 Mt 19:27

654 Mt 17:1

655 Mt 26:37; Jn 20:3-8

656 Mt 16:16

657 Acts 2:5-7

658 Acts 2:41

659 Acts 4:4

660 Acts 15:15