

The Gospel today is one of the most tender and painful moments in all Scripture.

The risen Christ stands beside Peter after the Resurrection.

And hanging over the whole scene is one terrible memory: Peter denied Him.

Three times.

Not long before, Peter had spoken with enormous confidence:

“Even if all fall away, I will not.”

But when fear came, Peter collapsed.

Around a charcoal fire, he denied even knowing Christ.

And now, beside another charcoal fire on the shore, Christ asks him three times:

“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

Three questions for three denials.

Not to humiliate Peter.

To heal him.

This is important.

Because Christ does not merely forgive sin externally.

He restores the wounded heart.

He rebuilds what sin has damaged.

And notice something beautiful:

Christ does not begin by asking Peter: “Why did you fail me?”

He asks: “Do you love me?”

Because love is the centre of everything.

And Peter answers with humility now.

The old self-confidence is gone.

No boasting remains.

No claims of superiority.

Only: **“Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”**

That is the voice of a soul purified by failure.

Peter now knows his own weakness.

And strangely, that makes him stronger than before.

Because saints are not people who never fell.

Saints are people rebuilt by grace.

Then Christ says something astonishing: **“Feed my lambs.”**

Peter the denier becomes Peter the shepherd.

Christ entrusts His flock not to a flawless man—but to a forgiven man.

That is deeply Catholic.

The Church rests not upon human perfection, but upon grace.

And yet this forgiveness is not cheap sentiment.

Christ immediately speaks about suffering.

“When you are old, you will stretch out your hands.”

The Gospel tells us this meant the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God.

The coward who once fled death will one day embrace martyrdom.

Grace has transformed him completely.

And then comes the final command: **“Follow me.”**

Not merely: admire me.

Not: speak about me.

Follow me. Even to the Cross.

And today the Church remembers St Rita of Cascia, who understood this deeply.

Her life was marked by suffering.

A difficult marriage.

Violence in her family.

The death of her husband.

The loss of her children.

And yet she became a saint not by escaping suffering, but by allowing grace to transform suffering into holiness.

That is why she is called the saint of impossible causes.

Because Christ brings life where the world sees only ruin.

Then the first reading gives another striking scene.

Paul stands before governors and kings accused by his enemies.

And what is the centre of the dispute?

Festus says:

“There were questions about a certain Jesus who had died but whom Paul asserted to be alive.”

That is the centre of Christianity.

Not philosophy.

Not ethics alone.

A living person.

Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

Everything hangs on that.

Paul suffers because he refuses to deny it.

Peter dies because he refuses to deny it.

The martyrs die because Christ truly lives.

And this changes everything about suffering.

Without the Resurrection, suffering becomes meaningless.

But because Christ lives, suffering can become redemptive.

Peter's tears become sanctity.

Rita's sorrows become holiness.

The Cross becomes glory.

And perhaps the deepest line in the Gospel is the simplest: **"Do you love me?"**

Not: Are you impressive? Not: Are you successful? Love.

Because holiness is finally measured by love of Christ.

And that question reaches every soul today.

After failures.

After compromises.

After weaknesses.

Christ still asks: Do you love me?

And if the answer is yes—even weakly, imperfectly, tremblingly—grace can rebuild everything.

That is the hope of the Gospel.

Peter failed terribly.

And yet he became the rock of the Church.

Not because he trusted himself—but because he finally trusted Christ completely.

So today the Church gives us both realism and hope.

Realism—because discipleship leads toward the Cross.

Hope—because failure is not the end when surrendered to Christ.

The risen Lord still restores sinners. Still calls shepherds.

Still transforms weakness into sanctity.

And still speaks the same words to every disciple: Follow me.