

## The Faith of Our Fathers

These are the two themes of today's Gospel: In the first place, Our Lord assures us that He will not let us perish from hunger. Secondly and even more assuredly, He will never let us perish spiritually. No matter how great our sins, we are never to despair! Yet the disciples did despair—they were terrified and full of doubts. The closer the Savior came to them, the more they wanted to flee. So Peter cries out, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man!" Peter became so upset that he actually wanted to thrust away the Lord who wanted to bestow forgiveness. It is for such spiritual need especially, that Christ brings rich comfort, as He did for Peter and the disciples; and as He also does for you. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

In today's Gospel St. Peter says, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." For he is struck with fear at the divine blessings. And the more he thinks he deserves them, the less he presumes to ask for them or expect them. You also should say, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." Then the Lord may answer you also, "Fear not." For the Lord is kind to those who confess their sins. Fear not also to attribute what is yours to the Lord. For what is His He has given to us. He knows nothing of envy. He does not snatch away from us. He does not rob us. See how good the Lord is? He has given so much to men, so that they even have the authority to distribute and give out the Life that He is! (St. Ambrose) ❧❧❧

In today's Gospel reading, Our Lord Christ says two things. First, He assures us that He will not let us perish from hunger. Second (and this is even more certain) He tells us He will never let us perish spiritually. No matter how great our sins, we are never to despair! The misery of hunger can surely be great, but He will provide enough for us. But more importantly, since we are all sinners, our spiritual need is greater. That explains why the disciples were so terrified and full of doubts. The closer the Savior gets to them, the more they wanted to flee. Peter became so upset that he actually wanted to push away the

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For *Trinity 5*. These excerpts are intended as meditative pieces for the Day's pericopes. They have been edited and abridged for style, sense and space.

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Jesus who wanted to help him and give him forgiveness. Yet Christ sees his spiritual need (and yours also) and brings rich comfort, as he did here for the disciples. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

The Lord knows who are His. Seeing them (that is, visiting them in mercy), He carries them on to the shore—to the peace of the life to come. The fisherman are the Teachers of the Church who catch us in the net of faith, and as it were bring us to the shore—to the land of the living. The net was broken but the fish do not escape. For the Lord preserves His own amid the trials of persecution. The Lord soothes the fears of people so that no one needs to be afraid in his conscience because of his own past guilt. He also soothes their fears so that when they see the innocence of others, they are neither confused nor discouraged to take the road to sanctity. (St. Bede)

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