

FIRST LETTER OF PETER



We know almost nothing about the life of the apostle Peter after the Council of Jerusalem in the year 49 A.D. (see Acts 15). What was his situation in Jerusalem after his miraculous deliverance the night before his execution (Acts 12)? It was in the year 44 A.D. The death of Herod Agrippa, a few months later, did not prevent the high priests from wanting Paul's death. When did he leave for the Greek world? What contacts did he have with the communities that Paul established? We do know that, in Corinth, a party laid claim on him and apparently knew him (1 Cor 1:12). When did he get to Rome? This letter is helpful in finding an answer.

This is an important letter not only because of what it says but also because it gives us a glimpse of the Church of the apostles. It has many points of contact with the letters of James and Paul, especially the epistle to the Romans. Faith was not made up of beliefs evolving according to the feelings of diverse communities. The testimonies about Jesus, his person and his Gospel, were not left to anonymous writers ready to alter them according to the needs of the moment. There was a solid and

coordinated preaching of the apostles based on untouchable information that was already called Tradition or Doctrine. Prophets, who were used to giving a Christian interpretation of the Old Testament, were gradually creating a Christian language and since they were itinerant, this language had to agree with the testimony of the apostles.

Peter tells us that his letter, handwritten by Silas or Silvanus, Paul's former companion (5:12), is addressed to the communities of the different Roman provinces located in today's Turkey. Did Peter know them personally? He refers to a persecution threatening them or, at least, to the hostile attitude of the authorities, and he encourages them by showing them the example of Christ. We do not have to imagine a widespread and official persecution as the one that occurred under Domitian at the time of Revelation or under Trajan in the year 110 A.D. Instead, it was a matter of nuisances and slander on the part of unbelievers before the courts. An analysis of the themes and the terminology seems to show that Peter's letter precedes Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, therefore, before the year 60 A.D. It would be very difficult to deny that it was known by the author of the letter to the Hebrews, written before the year 66 A.D. The occasion for writing it may have been Paul's arrest in Jerusalem in the year 58 A.D., an event that impacted the provinces of Asia where the Jews were influential.

In looking for the originality of this letter, we should emphasize the following three points:

- From 1:3 to 3:7, everything draws its inspiration from the baptismal ceremony, hymns and the homily on the meaning of baptism and the type of life that the newly baptized will lead.

- The letter praises the new people of the baptized, living stones of the real temple and priests of God for spiritual worship.

- On many occasions, Peter invites us to meditate on Christ's passion: his sacrifice is still present at the heart of God's people and persecution is part of their vocation.

An ancient tradition assures us that Peter was killed during Nero's persecution and that he was buried on the property of Vatican hill. Recent excavations have enabled us to find a tomb containing bones and bearing different inscriptions. It is almost certainly the tomb of the apostle Peter, the first stone of the Church.

FIRST LETTER OF PETER



1¹From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to all those living as aliens in the Dispersion, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ²to those whom God the Father has called according to his plan, and made holy by the Spirit to obey Jesus Christ, and be purified by his blood: may grace and peace increase among you.

You have been saved

³Let us praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his great mercy. In raising Jesus Christ from the dead, he has given us new life, and living hope. ⁴The inheritance that does not corrupt, nor goes bad, nor passes away, was reserved for you in heaven, ⁵since God's power shall keep you faithful until salvation is revealed in the last days.

⁶There is cause for joy, then, even though you may, for a time, have to suffer many trials. ⁷Thus will your faith be tested like gold in a furnace. Gold, however, passes away, but faith, worth so much more, will bring you, in the end, praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ appears.

⁸You have not yet seen him, and yet you love him; even without seeing him, you believe in him, and experience a heavenly joy beyond all words, ⁹for you are reaching the goal of your faith: the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰This was the salvation for which the prophets, so eagerly looked when in days past, foretold the favor of God with regard to you. ¹¹But they could only investigate when the Spirit of Christ present within them, pointed out the time and the circumstances of this—the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which would follow.

¹²It was revealed to them that they were working, not for themselves, but for you. Thus, in these days, after the Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven, the gospel preachers have taught you these mysteries, which even the angels long to see.

1 PETER 1:1-12

Read: Peter is writing to an audience who were once pagans but now are Christians. The challenge is to maintain the integrity of their Christian lives in a world that does not share their values.

Reflect: Think of a big challenge that tested your faith. How did you live those moments? Has that situation helped you deepen the faith? What does this mean to you: “the salvation obtained through Jesus Christ”?

Pray: Ask God to strengthen your faith, that trials may increase your hope. Ask, too, to be a prophetic voice in difficulties.

Act: Convey optimism to your people; share with them the joy and Christian hope you experience in life.

Be holy

¹³So, then, let your spirit be ready. Be alert, with confident trust, in the grace you will receive when Jesus Christ appears. ¹⁴Like obedient children, do not return to your former life, given over to ignorance and passions. ¹⁵Imitate the one who called you. As he is holy, so you, too, be holy in all your conduct ¹⁶since Scripture says: *Be holy for I am holy.*

¹⁷You call upon a Father who makes no distinction between persons, but judges according to each one’s deeds; take seriously, then, these years which you spend in a strange land. ¹⁸Remember that you were freed from the useless way of life of your ancestors, not with gold and silver, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of the Lamb without spot or blemish. ²⁰God, who has known Christ before the world began, revealed him to you in the last days. ²¹Through him, you have faith in God who raised him from the dead and glorified him in order that you might put all your faith and hope in God.

²²In obeying the truth, you have gained interior purification, from which comes sincere mutual love. Love one another then, with all your heart, ²³since you are born again, not from mortal beings, but with enduring life, through the word of God who lives and remains forever. ²⁴It is written: *All flesh is grass and its glory like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flower falls,* ²⁵*but the word of the Lord endures forever.* This word is the gospel, which has been brought to you.

1 PETER 1:13-25

Read: Now baptized, they must grow in holiness, trusting God, loving one another and confident of the resurrection. They must live together trusting in God.

Reflect: What does this sentence mean to you: “Be holy for I am holy”? What are the consequences in your everyday life? Is your community a holy community? What are the biggest difficulties a Christian has to overcome to live a holy life?

Pray: Pray to God that the love you have for others be a visible sign of the love that He has for all of humanity.

Act: Share how important it is for a Christian to live a holy life.

Christ is the cornerstone

2¹ So, give up all evil and deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and every kind of gossip. ² Like newborn children, seek eagerly for the pure milk of the word that will help you grow and reach salvation. ³ *Did you not taste the goodness of the Lord?* ⁴ He is the living stone rejected by people but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him, ⁵ so that you, too, become living stones built into a spiritual temple, a holy community of priests, offering spiritual sacrifices that please God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ Scripture says: *See, I lay in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone; whoever believes in him will not be disappointed.*

⁷ This means honor for you who believed, but for unbelievers, also *the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone* ⁸ and it is *a stone to stumble over, a rock which lays people low.* They stumble over it, in rejecting the word, but the plan of God is fulfilled in this.

⁹ You are a *chosen race, a community of priest-kings, a consecrated nation, a people God has made his own, to proclaim his wonders,* for he called you from your darkness to his own wonderful light. ¹⁰ At one stage, you were *no people*, but now you are *God’s people*, you had not received *his mercy*, but now you *have been given mercy.*

1 PETER 2:1-10

Read: Faced with hostility Christians grow closer to Christ. The world throws them away as unwanted stones, but they are precious in God's eyes and Christ will build them into a holy place where God dwells.

Reflect: Peter tells the Christians they are "precious in God's sight" and that they are "offering spiritual sacrifices though Christ." How is this reflected in your life? In the life of your parish?

Pray: Ask the Lord to transform the members of your community into "living stones"; that the way you live may help in the improvement and growth of the life of the Church.

Act: Commit yourself with your community to make some specific action to improve the life of the church, be it at the parish or the diocese. Do not be afraid to be recognized as Christian before others.

Live a blameless life

¹¹Beloved, while you are strangers and exiles, I urge you not to indulge in selfish passions that wage war on the soul. ¹²Live a blameless life among the pagans; so, when they accuse you falsely of any wrong, they may see your good works and give glory to God on the day he comes to them.

¹³For the Lord's sake, respect all human authority: the king as the chief authority, ¹⁴the governors, as sent by him to punish evildoers, and to encourage those who do good. ¹⁵And God wants you to do good, so that you may silence those fools who ignorantly criticize you. ¹⁶Behave as free people, but do not speak of freedom as a license for vice; you are free men, and God's servants. ¹⁷Reverence each person, love your brothers and sisters, fear God and show respect to the emperor.

¹⁸Servants must respect their masters, not only those who are good and understanding but also those who are difficult. ¹⁹For there is merit in putting up with unprovoked suffering for the sake of God. ²⁰What merit would there be in taking a beating when you have done wrong? But if you endure punishment when you have done well, that is a grace before God.

²¹This is your calling: remember Christ, who suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you may follow in his way. ²²*He did no wrong and there was no deceit in his mouth.* ²³He did not return insult for insult, and when suffering, he did not curse but put himself in the hands of God who judges justly. ²⁴He went to the cross, bearing our sins in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live an upright life. *For, by his wounds, you have been healed.* ²⁵You were like *stray sheep*, but you have come back to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

1 PETER 2:11-25

Read: In a world that regards them as aliens because of their faith, they must take special care that their lives reflect Christ, even those who are slaves with unjust masters. Their example in suffering is Christ.

Reflect: Can Christians be identified by the way they live? How does this sentence influence your life: “Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you follow in his steps”?

Pray: Ask God the grace to love others as Christ loved us. Pray for Christians who have civil responsibilities, that the law of love be visible in their decisions.

Act: Join any public initiative that may help you meet the commandment of love and solidarity in your society.

Duties of husbands and wives

3¹In the same way, wives must be submissive to their husbands. If any of them resists the word, they will be won over without words by the conduct of their wives. ²It will be enough for them to see your responsible and blameless conduct.

³Do not be taken up with outward appearances: hairstyles, gold necklaces, and clothes. ⁴There is something more permanent that shines from within a person: a gentle and peaceful disposition. This is really precious in God’s eyes. ⁵This was the way the holy women of the past dressed. They put their trust in God, and were obedient to their husbands; ⁶namely, Sarah, who had such respect for Abraham that she called him her lord. You are her children if you do what is right and are not afraid.

⁷Husbands, in your turn, be sensible in your life together. Be considerate, realizing that the woman is of a more frail disposition and that you both share in the gift of life. This will prevent anything from coming in the way of your prayer.

1 PETER 3:1-7

Read: Christians reflect Christ in their families, even when married to someone who is not a Christian. As with the Pauline letters, the theme of the living a Christian life within the family has value, where the specific advice reflects the patriarchal and sexist thinking of those days and is not appropriate now.

Reflect: How do you live your faith in your family environment? If you are married, how do you face the challenges of married life? Do you trust the love of God that heals and redeems everything?

Pray: Raise your family up in prayer to the Lord. May Christ be the sustenance, strength and consolation for your family.

Act: Invite the members of your family to have a moment of prayer at home, where they can express their concerns, desires, and thanksgiving. If you are married, invite your spouse to read and reflect on some biblical passages (1 Cor 13, for example) together, and later on renew your marriage vows.

⁸Finally, you should all be of one mind: share each other's troubles with mutual affection, be compassionate and humble. ⁹Do not repay evil for evil, or answer one insult with another. Give a blessing instead, since this is what you have been called to do, and so you will receive the blessing. ¹⁰*For if you seek life and want to see happiness, keep your tongue from evil and your mouth from speaking deceit.* ¹¹*Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.* ¹²*Because the Lord's eyes are turned to the just and his ears listen to their appeal. But the Lord frowns on evildoers.*

Do not fear or be disturbed

¹³Who can harm you if you devote yourselves to doing good? ¹⁴If you suffer for the sake of righteousness, happy are you. *Do not fear what they fear or be disturbed as they are,* ¹⁵*but bless the Lord Christ in your*

hearts. Always have an answer ready when you are called upon to account for your hope, but give it simply and with respect. ¹⁶Keep your conscience clear so that those who slander you may be put to shame by your upright Christian living. ¹⁷Better to suffer for doing good, if it is God's will, than for doing wrong.

Endure sufferings as Christ did

¹⁸Remember how Christ died, once and for all, for our sins. He, the just one, died for the unjust, in order to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, ¹⁹and it was then that he went to preach to the imprisoned spirits. ²⁰They were the generation who did not believe, when God, in his great patience, delayed punishing the world while Noah was building the ark, in which a small group of eight persons escaped through the water. ²¹That was a type of the baptism that now saves you; this baptism is not a matter of physical cleansing, but of asking God to reconcile us through the resurrection of Christ Jesus. ²²He has ascended to heaven, and is at the right hand of God, having subjected the angels, Dominions and Powers.

1 PETER 3:8-22

Read: As with the family so with the Church community, they should have "sympathy for one another, a tender heart and a gentle mind." The example in suffering is Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is their example. Just as God was with Noah, so God is with them in baptism.

Reflect: This passage shows how baptism is to change the lives of Christians. What lines in this reading do you take to heart?

Pray: Thank God for the new life received at Baptism and for each new member who receives it in your community. Ask for strength, courage, and conviction so that Christians may give good witness of their faith.

Act: Pledge to live with sympathy for others, with a tender heart and a gentle mind.

4¹ Given that Christ suffered in his human life, arm yourselves with this certainty: the one who suffers in his body has broken with sin,² so as to spend the rest of his life following the will of God, and not human passions.

³ You have given enough time, in the past, to living as the pagans do: a life of excess, evil passions, drunkenness, orgies and worship of idols. ⁴ They now find it strange that you are no longer swept along with them in this ruinous flood, and then abuse you for it. ⁵ But they will be accountable to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶ The gospel has been preached to many who are now dead. As humans, they received a deadly sentence, but through the spirit, they shall live for God.

⁷ The end of all things is near; keep your minds calm and sober, for prayer. ⁸ Above all, let your love for one another be sincere, for love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Welcome one another into your houses without complaining. ¹⁰ Serve one another with the gifts each of you received, thus becoming good managers of the varied graces of God. ¹¹ If you speak, deliver the word of God; if you have a special ministry, let it be seen as God's power, so that, in everything, God may be glorified in Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

1 PETER 4:1-11

Read: Christians should expect that when they change their lives to live the will of God others will not understand them. Love, hospitality and mutual service define the Christian community. If they suffer for their faith, they are sharing Christ's sufferings, and like Christ trust themselves to their faithful Creator.

Reflect: How do you live a Christian life? What's the difference between the lives of Christians and those who are not Christians? Have you ever felt marginalized by the faith you profess? What do you think of "love covers a multitude of sins"?

Pray: Give thanks to God for the gifts in your life. Ask for a generous spirit to always put it at the service of the community and of anyone in need.

Act: "Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received," says Peter. Identify your gifts and put them at the service of others.

Be glad to share in the sufferings of Christ

¹²My dear people, do not be surprised at the testing by fire, which is taking place among you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³Instead, you should be glad to share in the sufferings of Christ because, on the day his glory is revealed, you will also fully rejoice. ¹⁴You are fortunate if you are insulted because of the name of Christ, for the Spirit of glory rests on you. ¹⁵I suppose that none of you should suffer for being a murderer, a thief, a criminal or an informer; ¹⁶but if anyone suffers on account of being a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace; rather, let this name bring glory to God.

¹⁷The time of judgment has come, and it begins with God's household. If it's beginning so affects us, what will be the end of those who refuse to believe in the gospel? ¹⁸*If the just one is barely saved, what will happen to the sinner and unbeliever?* ¹⁹So then, if you suffer according to God's will, entrust yourself to the faithful creator, and continue to do good.

1 PETER 4:12-19

Read: Christians model their life after Christ, suffer as Christ suffered, and like Jesus, trust themselves into the hands of the Creator.

Reflect: Even in our days, there are Christians who are persecuted. Is it easy to live the Christian hope today? From your personal situation, do you endure with confidence and faith the difficulties of being Christian?

Ask: Pray for persecuted Christians. Pray also for those who suffer ridicule or rejection. Pray for everyone's strength and Jesus' constant presence in our lives.

Act: If you know anyone being persecuted, mocked, or discriminated against, offer your support and assistance in whatever way you can help.

Further admonitions

5 ¹I now address myself to those elders among you; I, too, am an elder, and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, hoping to share the

glory that is to be revealed. ²Shepherd the flock which God has entrusted to you, guarding it, not out of obligation, but willingly, for God's sake; not as one looking for a reward, but with a generous heart; ³do not lord it over those in your care, rather be an example to your flock. ⁴Then, when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will be given a crown of unfading glory.

⁵In the same way, let the younger ones among you respect the authority of the elders. All of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another because *God opposes the proud but gives his grace to the humble.*

⁶Bow down, then, before the power of God, so that he will raise you up at the appointed time. ⁷Place all your worries on him, since he takes care of you.

⁸Be sober and alert, because your enemy the devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. ⁹Stand your ground, firm in your faith, knowing that our brothers and sisters, scattered throughout the world, are confronting similar sufferings. ¹⁰God, the giver of all grace, has called you to share in Christ's eternal glory, and after you have suffered a little, he will bring you to perfection: he will confirm, strengthen and establish you forever. ¹¹Glory be to him forever and ever. Amen.

¹²I have had these few lines of encouragement written to you by Silvanus, our brother, whom I know to be trustworthy. For I wanted to remind you of the kindness of God really present in all this. Hold on to it.

¹³Greetings from the community in Babylon, gathered by God, and from my son, Mark.

¹⁴Greet one another with a friendly embrace. Peace to you all who are in Christ.

1 PETER 5:1-14

Read: Peter addresses first the community "elders," that is, the leaders and those responsible for the community. He asks them to take care of the flock as God wants. Then he asks the young people for understanding with their leaders. Finally, he urged the community to have a life sober and firm, according to God's will.

Reflect: “Restore, support, strengthen, establish” are the verbs Peter urges on the leaders of the Christian community. How are these verbs active in your parish?

Pray: Give thanks to God for the universal Church. Ask for all vocations, and in particular, for those who are devoted to the service of the community. Ask also for the members of your parish, that they give good witness of Christian life.

Act: Decide when and how you will seek to practice the virtue of humility.

SECOND LETTER OF PETER



According to the prevailing opinion today, it is a later book, probably written around the year 100 A.D. So it is presented as the second letter of Peter and it does its best to convince us. If it is not by Peter, that would not prevent it from being the word of God even if, at times, it expresses thoughts that seem strange on Peter's lips.

Those who deny its authenticity lean, at times, on the idea that the letter duplicates many passages from the letter of Jude, a text surely written after the death of Peter and Paul (Jd 17-18). In fact, as the early Church used to say, it seems more natural to think that Jude took up the predictions already mentioned in Peter's second letter (3:3-4). Therefore, we cannot invoke this argument to deny its authenticity.

Its three chapters refer to three concerns of the Church of the time, when the generation of those formed by the apostles appeared before the Church had set the main thrust of its organization. The author wants:

- to preserve the faith just as the witnesses of Jesus taught it;
- to fight against false teachers who distort the faith and also lead to immorality;
- to explain through God's patience why Christ had not yet returned.

SECOND LETTER OF PETER



1 ¹Symeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been sanctified by our God and Savior Jesus Christ, and have received a faith as precious as ours:

²may grace and peace abound in you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus, our Lord.

We share in the divine nature

³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and piety. First, the knowledge of the One who called us through his own glory and Might, by which we were given the most extraordinary and precious promises. ⁴Through them, you share in the divine nature, after repelling the corruption and evil desires of this world.

⁵So strive with the greatest determination, and increase your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, ⁶knowledge with moderation, moderation with constancy, constancy with piety, ⁷piety with mutual affection, mutual affection with charity. ⁸If all these riches are in you, so as to abound in you, you will not be idle and useless; you will, rather, be rooted in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord. ⁹Whoever is not aware of this, is blind and shortsighted, and is forgetful of the cleansing of former sins.

¹⁰Therefore, brothers and sisters, strive more and more to respond to the call of God who chose you. If you do so, you will never stumble. ¹¹Moreover, you will be generously granted entry to the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

¹²So, I shall always remind you of these things, though you know them, and remain firm in the truth that you have. ¹³It seems fitting that as long as I live in the tent of this body, I refresh your memory of them, ¹⁴knowing that my tent may soon be folded up, as our Lord Jesus Christ

has shown me. ¹⁵I will, nonetheless, endeavor to see, that after my departure you will be constantly reminded of all this.

2 PETER 1:1-15

Read: This section and indeed the entire letter is a plea for Christians to “participate in the divine nature. “This is there vocation and their life flows from it.

Reflect: What are your thoughts about the call to participate in the divine nature? What do you think of when you read this?

Pray: Christ Jesus, stay close to me, help live as you live, lead me to the kingdom of God.

Act: Think of a specific virtue you need to cultivate and make a conscious effort to integrate it into your daily life.

The foundation of faith

¹⁶Indeed, what we taught you about the power, and the return of Christ Jesus our Lord, was not drawn from myths or formulated theories. We, ourselves, were eyewitnesses of his majesty ¹⁷when he received glory and honor from God the Father, when, from the magnificent glory, this most extraordinary word came upon him: “This is my beloved Son, this is my Chosen One.” ¹⁸We, ourselves, heard this voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹Therefore, we believe most firmly in the message of the prophets, which you should consider rightly as a lamp shining in a dark place until the break of day when the Morning Star shines in your hearts.

²⁰Know this well: no prophecy of Scripture can be handed over to private interpretation, ²¹since no prophecy comes from human decision, for it was men of God, moved by the Holy Spirit, who spoke.

2 PETER 1:16-21

Read: The teaching they received comes directly from Christ and is the authentic teaching, the lamp that shines in the darkness.

Reflect: The Transfiguration passage expresses Jesus as God’s chosen one. Do you also feel chosen by God? When you think of

your life, of your faith in God the Father, how do you feel about him?

Pray: Surrender yourself to the love of God, like a child in the arms of his mother. Feel protected, loved and safe. Give thanks for this love.

Act: Take concrete action to provide protection or security to someone in need.

False teachers

2¹ Just as there have been false prophets in the midst of the people of Israel, so will there be false teachers among you. They will introduce harmful sects and, by denying the Master who saved them, they will bring upon themselves sudden perdition. ²Many, nonetheless, will imitate their vices and, because of them, the way of truth will be discredited. ³They will take advantage of you with deceitful words for the sake of money. But the judgment made upon them long ago is not idle, and the destruction awaiting them is not asleep.

⁴In fact, God did not pardon the angels who sinned, but cast them into hell, confining them in the dark pits, keeping them there until the day of judgment. ⁵Neither did he pardon the ancient world when he unleashed the waters of the flood upon the world of wicked people, but protected only Noah, the preacher of righteousness, along with seven others. ⁶God also condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, reducing them to ashes, to serve as a warning to the wicked in the future. ⁷But he saved Lot, a good man, deeply afflicted by the unbridled conduct of those vicious people. ⁸For Lot, a righteous man, who lived in their midst, suffered day after day in the goodness of his heart, as he saw and heard of their crimes.

⁹So, then, the Lord knows how to free from trial those who serve him and keep the wicked for punishment on the day of judgment.

¹⁰He will do this, especially for certain people who follow the baser desires of their nature and despise the Lord's majesty. Proud and daring they are, not afraid of insulting fallen spirits, ¹¹while the angels who are superior to them in strength and power, do not permit themselves any injurious accusation in the presence of the Lord.

¹²Those people are like irrational animals, born to be caught and killed; after they have slandered what they cannot understand, they will end like animals ¹³and they will suffer the repayment of their wickedness.

They delight in giving themselves to depravity, even in the daytime; they are deceiving you, even when they are sharing your table. ¹⁴With their eyes always looking for adultery, they do not tire of sinning and seducing weak souls. They are full of greed—an accursed people.

¹⁵They abandoned the right way and followed Balaam, son of Beor, who was attached to what he gained from his wrongdoing. ¹⁶But he was rebuked for his sin: his she-ass began to speak with a human voice, stopping the prophet in his madness. ¹⁷These people are like waterless springs, clouds driven by a storm which move swiftly into the blackest darkness.

¹⁸With their boastful and empty discourses, they encourage the lust and impure desire of those who have just freed themselves from the common errors.

¹⁹They promise freedom, when they, themselves, are slaves of corruption: for people are slaves to whatever dominates them. ²⁰Indeed, after being freed from worldly vices through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they returned to those vices and surrendered to them; and their present state has become worse than the first. ²¹It would have been better for them not to know the way of holiness than, knowing it, to turn away from the sacred doctrine that they had been taught. ²²In their case, these proverbs are relevant: “The dog turns back to its own vomit,” and: “Hardly the pig has been washed, it wallows back in the mud.”

2 PETER 2:1-22

Read: Teachers who mislead the Christian community are condemned in the strongest possible terms.

Reflect: The Church seems to have always had divisions between authentic and false teachers. Can you see this in your parish, in the universal church?

Pray: Ask God for the grace to remain faithful to the faith you have received and that you may be able to give valid testimony of Jesus, way, truth, and life for humanity.

Act: Invite your loved ones to deepen their knowledge of the faith they have received, and to witness it in everyday life.

Why is the second coming of Christ delayed?

3¹Dearly beloved, this is the second letter I write to you. In both of them, I have intended to remind you of sound doctrine. ²Do not forget the words of the holy prophets, and the teaching of our Lord and Savior, as you heard it through his apostles.

³Remember, first of all, that in the last days, scoffers will appear, their mockery serving their evil desires. ⁴And they will say, “What has become of his promised coming? Since our fathers in faith died, everything still goes on as it was from the beginning of the world.” ⁵Indeed, they deliberately ignore that, in the beginning, the heavens existed first, and earth appeared from the water, taking its form by the word of God. ⁶By the same word of God, this world perished in the Flood. ⁷Likewise, the word of God maintains the present heavens and earth until their destruction by fire; they are kept for the day of judgment when the godless will be destroyed. ⁸Do not forget, beloved, that with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord does not delay in fulfilling his promise, though some speak of delay; rather, he gives you time, because he does not want anyone to perish, but that all may come to conversion. ¹⁰The Day of the Lord is to come like a thief. Then the heavens will dissolve with a great noise; the elements will melt away by fire, and the earth, with all that is on it, will be burned up.

¹¹Since all things are to vanish, how holy and religious your way of life must be, ¹²as you wait for the day of God and long for its coming, when the heavens will dissolve in fire and the elements melt away in the heat. ¹³We wait for a new heaven and a new earth, in which justice reigns according to God’s promise.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, as you wait in expectation of this, strive that God may find you rooted in peace, without blemish or fault.

¹⁵And consider that God’s patience is for our salvation, as our beloved brother, Paul, wrote to you with the wisdom given him. ¹⁶He speaks of these things in all his letters. There are, however, some points in them that are difficult to understand, which people who are ignorant

and immature in their faith, twist, as they do with the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

¹⁷So then, dearly beloved, as you have been warned, be careful, lest those people who have gone astray deceive you, in turn, and drag you along, making you stumble, and finally fall away. ¹⁸Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: to him be glory, now, and to the day of eternity. Amen.

2 PETER 3:1-18

Read: The delay of the second coming of Jesus concerns the believers and is being mocked by nonbelievers. The response of the author to this situation is that God does not measure time as we do. If there is a delay, it is “because he does not want anyone to perish, but that all may come to conversion.”

Reflect: Do you expect a better world? Do you think that by the end of time love will conquer hate and death? What can we Christians do so that hope would not fail over the years?

Pray: Ask for wisdom, patience, and faith so that all Christians may know how to wait and rely on God’s salvation, and that we will be prepared for the final encounter with the Lord.

Act: Encourage in your family and your community conversations about the ultimate hope that we Christians have: the rejoicing and final encounter with the Lord. Talk about the need to be prepared for that.