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Peter the Rock - Peter, Satan?

[Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio](#)



Truth in advertising—after all the glowing reports of the benefits of a product, possible side effects need to be mentioned. Informed consent—before surgery, patients have to be told of all the things that could go wrong. That way, they have the chance to opt out before it's too late.

As soon had the truth came out at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus was the Messiah, the Lord made clear the unpleasant implications of this. When Jews thought of the Messiah in the first century, they thought of God's anointed, David, gloriously triumphing over the

Philistines and just about everyone else. They thought about the peace and prosperity of the empire ruled by Solomon.

Jesus knew that the end of the story would be even more glorious than this—eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. But he also knew that the way to such triumph was the way of the cross, and that anyone who wanted to be his disciple needed to follow him on this Via Dolorosa.

Jesus had just named him “prime minister” by calling him “the rock” and giving him the keys. So Peter felt it entirely his place to pull the king aside and advise him to take a different road. As he had been praised by the Master, now he is rebuked. Jesus goes so far as to call him “Satan.” That's a far cry from “the Rock!”

Some have pointed to this as proof that Peter, and his papal successors, are not infallible as Catholics claim. But actually, this illustrates well what the Catholic Church teaches about the subject. For Catholic doctrine does not proclaim that the pope can never make a mistake in personal judgment. It is only when he fully engages his



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authority as successor of Peter speaking from Peter's seat of authority ("ex cathedra") that the Church guarantees him to be acting under the charism of truth given by the Father through the Spirit. When Peter publicly proclaimed "you are the Christ," Jesus pointed out that this was not from him, but from the Father. When Peter privately said, "God forbid that you should suffer," Jesus notes that the source of this was himself. And what's worse, this human opinion was being used by another to tempt the Lord to choose comfort and honor over suffering and sacrifice.

Jesus will have none of it, of course. After all, He is the truth incarnate. And the truth is that glory comes only after sacrifice. And His own incomparable sacrifice will not make things easy for his disciples, but will blaze the trail of sacrifice that they too must walk. The sacrifice that he will offer will be himself. The sacrifice they will be called to offer will be similar: "offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship." (Ro 12:1-2).



Peter couldn't quite get it. None of them could. This is entirely understandable. While during the ministry of Jesus the apostles here and there experienced a charism of the Holy Spirit, they had not yet experienced the indwelling of the Spirit. That only came when the fire descended on them in the upper room. Before Pentecost, they ran from suffering. After Pentecost they run towards it. Peter, who denied Jesus, ultimately gave his life for him. The Successor of Peter, John Paul II, preaching his most eloquent sermon in the twilight years of his life, a living witness of loving self-giving which is a fruit of Pentecost.

Truth in advertising. Salvation is a free gift of grace, but it will cost you everything. When faithfulness to Jesus brings ridicule rather than applause, don't complain like Jeremiah. Jesus makes clear the cost of discipleship up front. But he also reminds us that the pearl of great price is worth anything we have to pay for it.

Peter, the Pope and Infallibility

While there is nothing more Catholic than the Pope and the Papacy - it raises a lot of questions by Catholics and Non-Catholics about the [Papacy](#) and its institution. [Peter, the Pope and Infallibility](#) by Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio will help answer many of the questions that people may ask during this time of mourning. This CD (or AT) is 45 minutes in length and was given during Dr. D'Ambrosio pilgrimage to Rome.



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