

**April 29**

**ON SAINT PETER, MARTYR**

**117.1 First Point**

We cannot sufficiently admire the faith of the martyr, Saint Peter, for he possessed it perfectly even from his childhood and he died in its defense.

This saint was born of Manichean parents, yet they never could convince him by promises or threats to follow their false religion, nor could his childhood companions, who were heretical. He was only seven years old when his uncle asked him what he had learned in school, and he replied that he had learned what to believe about God, and thereupon recited the Catholic profession of faith. When his uncle rejoined that he should not believe any of this, he answered: I will believe it unto death; and nothing will ever prevent me from believing it!

Is it not amazing to find such strong faith in a seven year old child? Do you have such faith, that nothing can prevent you from professing by your actions the truths and maxims of the Gospel?

**117.2 Second Point**

This saint's great faith led him to become a religious of Saint Dominic, because this saint had founded his order to give the Church preachers to combat heretics who at that time were seriously disturbing the Church. Saint Peter was fortunate to receive the habit from the hands of Saint Dominic himself.

On one occasion in community, he displayed his faith and confidence in God. Two women saints came from heaven to visit him in his cell, and he was accused of having allowed worldly women to visit him. As a result the prior of the monastery had him put in prison. The saint endured this calumny founded on a false and rash judgment, without offering any defense and without saying a single word. But God who protects those who are unjustly persecuted made his innocence known to his fellow religious.

Do you keep silence in a like manner when you are reprov'd for faults which you did not commit? What you should do on such occasions, and what you perhaps fail to do, is to say nothing to defend yourself and to profit by the humiliation.

**117.3 Third Point**

This saint displayed his faith openly by preaching against the heretics and made a great many outstanding converts among them. God gave to his words, inspired by faith, a very great holiness, and the crowds of people who came to listen to his sermons were so large that he had to be carried into the church on a litter.

All these conversions, together with his preaching, and the fact that the Pope named him Inquisitor of the Faith, caused the heretics to hate him so much that some of them set out to waylay him. They caught up with him on the highroad and struck him a blow on the head with a sword. He had just time enough before he died to repeat his profession of faith and to write with a finger dipped in his own blood: I believe in God.

Do you have a faith as lively as that of this saint? You are bound to excel in the spirit of faith, for you have to teach children the maxims of the holy Gospel and the mysteries of our religion. Often say to God with the holy apostles: Lord, increase our faith!<sup>613</sup>

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Peter, Martyr (1205 - 1252), though born of heretical parents somehow grew up as an orthodox Catholic and entered the Dominican order. He became a successful preacher in Lombardy and was appointed Inquisitor General for the territory around Milan by Pope Gregory IX in 1234. His zeal in this office aroused hostility and led to his assassination while he was traveling from Como to Milan. His murderer repented and died as a Dominican brother. De La Salle was attracted to him as a model of the spirit of faith.