

GOSPEL MEDITATION -
ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

August 30, 2026
The 22nd Sunday
in
Ordinary Time

Readings:

Jeremiah 20:7—9

Psalm 63

Romans 12:1—2

Matthew 16:21—27

Do you know what it is like to be thrilled by the power of Christian faith one moment and then utterly fail in it the next? I do. That is Peter in today's Gospel. After last week's bold confession, he now hears Jesus speak of suffering and death, and something in him recoils. He takes Jesus aside and tries to correct him. Jesus responds with the shocking rebuke, **"Get behind me, Satan."**

Peter is the mirror of every disciple. We love Jesus until he contradicts the script we have written for our lives. Peter does not reject Jesus. He rejects a *suffering* Jesus. So do we, whenever we avoid a hard responsibility, resist a demanding relationship, or cling to comfort instead of choosing love. We want a Lord who supports our plans, not one who overturns them.

Yet Jesus does not discard Peter. He redirects him. **"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."** In effect, Jesus says, stop trying to lead me. Let me lead you. Discipleship does not begin with heroism or clarity but with surrender. It means trusting that God's path to life often passes through places we would never choose.

Peter is all of us. We move from insight to confusion, from confidence to correction. That is why we should have hope. Jesus patiently teaches us again and again. Trust me. Get behind me. Follow me. When we stop fighting the crosses that come and start carrying them with him, we discover a freedom deeper than comfort and a love stronger than fear.

— *Father John Muir*

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