From Fr. Jason

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During the month of November, the Church invites us to contemplate the Communion of Saints and the mystery of Her own foundation. On November 18, we celebrate the Dedication of the Basilicas of Sts. Peter and Paul - two humble fishermen from Galilee who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, became the columns upon which Christ built His Church. Let us not approach this feast as a mere historical anniversary or an archaeological curiosity.

Let us begin with Peter. Imagine the scene: a night of wind and waves, the cock crowing three times, the courtyard fire casting shadows on a face twisted with fear. "I do not know the man!" Three denials, three wounds in the heart of the one Jesus had called "rock." Yet the Risen Lord does not discard him. On the shore of the lake, with the charcoal fire burning - echo of the fire of betrayal - Jesus asks three times: "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" And three times Peter, humbled, answers: "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." From this triple profession of love after a triple fall, the Lord entrusts him with the keys and the flock: "Feed my lambs… Tend my sheep." **The Basilica of St. Peter rises over his tomb not as a monument to human fidelity, but as a perpetual sign of Divine Mercy that builds the Church on the weakness of those who, having fallen, are able to humbly receive the grace to love.**

Now turn to Paul. A Pharisee of Pharisees, zealous for the Law, breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. On the road to Damascus, he is not seeking Christ; he is hunting Christians. But the Lord hunts him first. Blinded by light, thrown to the ground, he hears the voice that shatters his world: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" In that moment the persecutor becomes the persecuted, the hunter the hunted, the enemy the beloved. Three days of darkness in Damascus, fasting and prayer, and then the scales fall from his eyes through the hands of Ananias - a simple disciple who trembles to lay hands on the wolf. From this encounter is born the Apostle to the Gentiles, who will write: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." **The Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls remind us that the Church expands not by human strategy but by the folly of the Cross.**

This feast of the Dedication invites us to a profound reflection. Let us ask ourselves concrete questions, not in the abstract, but before the Lord who knows us. Where have I denied the Lord this week? In the small betrayals - gossip that wounds a brother, silence when I should have defended the faith, fear of what others will say if I live the Gospel? Where have I persecuted Christ? In the judgments I carry in my heart, against that brother who irritates me? In the refusal to forgive, which is always a persecution of the Body of Christ? And where has the Lord thrown me to the ground this week? In a failure at work, in a humiliation in the family, in a sin that left me blinded? Do not flee from these moments; they are Damascus roads where the Lord waits to anoint your eyes.

The Basilicas of Peter and Paul are not museums of the past; they are living stones because every time a sinner rises, the Church is rebuilt. Let us prepare practically for this feast by making a good confession this week, asking the Holy Spirit to show you the denials and persecutions of your life. **May Our Lady obtain for us the grace to be a Church that is poor, missionary, and joyful - built not on the sand of our virtues but on the rock of Christ's mercy.**

Sts. Peter and Paul, princes of the apostles, martyrs of Rome, intercede for our parish. May the fire of Pentecost that descended upon you descend anew upon us, that we may leave our nets, our securities, our old selves, and follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

Peace,