

RESOLUTIONS

One of the places that I visited a number of times when studying in Rome is called “Quo Vadis.” It is located along the famous Roman highway, The Appian Way, leading south out of Rome. Translated from the Latin, “Quo vadis?” means, “Where are you going?” It refers to an encounter on that spot between Jesus and the Apostle Peter.

Prior to his crucifixion, the Lord had exhorted Peter to be a strengthening agent to the others. To this, Peter had replied, “Lord, I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you.” As we know, his resolve was shaken when tested at the time of Jesus’ arrest. He denied even knowing the Lord. Realizing his failure, Peter repented and went on to lead the apostolic group and the Church.

The Apostle’s witnessing to the Good News of Jesus Christ eventually took him to Rome. There, the Emperor Nero engaged in a persecution of those embracing the new religion, a campaign that he used to serve his own purpose. Peter, seeing that the situation was getting difficult and his own life was in jeopardy, decided to leave Rome.

As Peter made his way out of the city, he encountered an individual approaching him from the opposite direction, heading toward Rome. He recognized this person to be Jesus. Peter asked, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replied, “I am going to Rome to be crucified.”

Once again, Peter recognized his failure to be faithful to the Lord. He was continually coming face to face with his own weakness of will. Nevertheless, each time, he felt the Lord giving him the strength that he, himself, was supposed to be giving the other believers. As the vision of the Lord along the road disappeared, Peter turned around and returned to the city. There, he was arrested and crucified.

This is the man that we honor as a pillar of the Church. We do so not for any unwavering commitment or steadfast resolve but, rather, because of his capacity to recognize failure as merely a temporary lapse that can be overcome and (even more importantly) forgiven. The Church as the Assembly of Believers is composed of such as these. You and I are such as these.

Each new year gives us an opportunity to resolve taking steps for the betterment of our lives. While most of the resolutions that people make have to do with their own person, the more noble resolutions are those intended to make the lives of others better. As Christians, these resolutions are usually associated with our being faithful followers of the Lord. Unfortunately, the going does get tough, and it does not take long into the year for us to abandon the resolutions that we have made. We just cannot seem to avoid trials and, even, the cross.

As we make New Year’s resolutions, let us not do so with a lackadaisical attitude and an expectation of failure and eventual abandonment of what we have resolved to do. Instead, let us see each setback as an encounter with the Lord Jesus. It is He that gives us encouragement by being ready and willing to carry out our resolve for us, rather than to have us fail. He has already done so more than once! Dare we ask, “Quo vadis?”