

JUNE 16 2025, FATHER PETER TURRONE

“At an acceptable time, I have listened to you,
and on the day of salvation, I have helped you.
See, now is the acceptable time.
See, now is the day of salvation.”

Saint Paul is writing to the community in Corinth—his brothers and sisters who labour with him in spreading the gospel. Just before this passage, he urges them:

“Do not accept the grace of God in vain.”

What does it mean to accept God’s grace in vain?

First, what is grace? Grace takes many forms, but at its core, grace is God’s sharing of His own divine life with us. The more open we are to receiving it, the deeper we are drawn into the mystery of His presence—through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We each receive the Holy Spirit in baptism and confirmation. Some, like myself, receive Him again through holy orders; others through the sacrament of matrimony. Regardless of our vocation, we are all called to holiness and welcomed into God’s family. Receiving grace means allowing God to live and act through us. The more we surrender, the more space we give Him to work.

Pope St. Leo the Great, in his first homily, said beautifully: **“Make yourself small so that God can be glorified.”**
It’s not about us. It’s about Him.

Yet God does not erase our uniqueness. Each one of us is created for a purpose: to give glory to God. We are meant to become signposts that point others not to ourselves, but to Jesus—to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

So how do we accept grace fruitfully?

We receive God's gift, His divine life, and we live it out—through the sacraments, through prayer, and through love. To receive His grace in vain is to do nothing with it. It's to be raised to supernatural life, but then to live as if we weren't. It's to forget the gift we've been given, to centre our lives on ourselves instead of Christ.

We admire the saints, but sometimes we feel overwhelmed by the example they set. We wonder, "How can I live like that?" Especially when we're tired or discouraged, our old habits—the "old self"—creep back in. Yet grace builds on nature. It doesn't erase our human weakness, but works through it. And if we let God in—if we give Him access—He begins the process of healing and sanctifying us. That is His desire for every one of us.

Saint Paul himself had a painful conversion. He knew weakness, and he knew grace. He speaks of the life of a Christian with these words: "Labours, vigils, fasting, purity, knowledge."

We are called to hard work in God's service, to rise early in prayer, to fast so we depend on God rather than on our appetites. We are called to live with pure hearts, to keep our eyes fixed on the Kingdom, and to surrender all our desires to Christ.

At the Vatican, I once witnessed a Mass filled with joy—hundreds of children from a Christian Brothers school were present. The priest gave a short, powerful homily I still reflect on every day. He told the children:

"Where you will be in the future will be determined by the desires you have in your heart today."

What do you desire?

We must allow the grace we received at baptism to be safeguarded and nourished—through patience, kindness, and a life in the Holy Spirit. We cannot become who God calls us to be without Him. But with the Holy Spirit, and with the guidance of our Blessed Mother and all the saints, we can walk this path.

So I encourage you: don't be afraid to surrender. Don't resist the grace of God. Let Him take over your life. Let Him make something beautiful—something holy—for the world and for the glory of the Father.

Let us pray for this every day.