

Cut to the Heart: Truth that Transforms

“Let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” — *Acts 2:36*

1. Uncompromising Truth: The Apostolic Kerygma

Peter stands in Jerusalem, not as a timid fisherman, but a bold apostle, proclaiming the Resurrection. He does not sugarcoat: “*This Jesus whom you crucified.*” This moment marks the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit would guide them into *all truth*.

From a Catholic apologetic perspective, this passage reveals the **foundational preaching of the Church**, rooted in:

- The **historical death** of Jesus,
- The **Resurrection**, and
- The **Divine Lordship** of Christ.

The Church Fathers saw this as the first **public proclamation of the Gospel**:

- **St. John Chrysostom** comments that Peter, once fearful, now speaks boldly because “the Holy Spirit had come upon him, transforming his human weakness.”
- **St. Augustine** affirms that “Peter convicts not to condemn, but to convert. His words are not arrows of hatred but calls to repentance.”

Thus, the Catholic Church does not preach a *softened Gospel*, but the full truth in love — the **crucified and risen Christ** as the only Savior.

2. Conviction Precedes Conversion

“*When they heard this, they were cut to the heart...*” (v. 37)

This line captures a universal moral truth: **Before true conversion, one must face the uncomfortable reality of one’s sin.**

Too often, society avoids this step. But without moral conviction, there is no transformation.

- **St. Basil the Great** teaches: “Unless the soul is wounded by the truth, it cannot be healed by grace.”
- **The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1431)** echoes this: “Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return to God with all our heart...”

The Church continues this apostolic model through:

- **The sacrament of confession**, which echoes Peter’s call: “Repent and be baptized.”
- **The preaching of moral truth**, even when it's counter-cultural, to awaken hearts.

3. A Real-Life Example: From Despair to Divine Mercy

Let me share a true story from the life of **Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC**, now a well-known priest and author.

As a young man, he was completely lost — addicted to drugs, involved in crime, and spiritually dead.

One night, he encountered a book on the Marian apparitions at Medjugorje. It was like Peter's words pierced his heart. He was “cut to the heart” — convicted by truth.

He threw out all his drugs, repented, and began a journey toward God. He later became a priest, dedicating his life to proclaiming the mercy and truth of Christ.

His story reflects the Acts 2 response: hearing truth ➤ conviction ➤ repentance ➤ transformation.

4. Baptism and the Beginning of the Church

Peter ends with:

“Repent and be baptized every one of you... for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (v. 38)

This shows:

- Baptism is not symbolic, but **efficacious for the forgiveness of sins** (cf. CCC 1227–1228).
- The **gift of the Holy Spirit** is not just personal; it inducts one into the **communion of the Church**.

St. Cyprian of Carthage wrote:

“No one can have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his mother.”

This baptism brings 3,000 into the Church (v. 41), establishing the communal reality of salvation — a strong apologetic against “Jesus and me” individualism.

Easter Tuesday Call

To the faithful: Let your heart be continually cut by the truth — not to shame you, but to set you free.

To the Church: Never dilute the Gospel. The same Word that wounded 3,000 hearts also healed them.

To the world: Repentance is not backward-looking — it's the gate to resurrection life.