

**“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.”** (*Acts 3:19*)

### **CONTEXT: The Miracle and the Message**

Peter and John had just healed a man lame from birth at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. As the crowd gathered in amazement, Peter seized the moment—not to exalt himself, but to proclaim **Jesus Christ**. He quickly clarifies:

“Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” (*v.12*)

Peter redirects their attention to the **God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, emphasizing the continuity of salvation history. Christ was not a disruption, but the fulfillment of God’s covenant with Israel.

#### **✠ St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Acts):**

“Peter does not accuse without also offering pardon. He terrifies, then consoles. He strikes, then heals.”

Chrysostom notes how Peter uses the miracle to reveal their sin—**they rejected the Holy and Righteous One**—but he immediately opens the door of **hope through repentance**.

#### **✠ St. Augustine:**

“Repentance is not merely remorse; it is the turning of the heart toward God, a re-ordering of love.”

Augustine helps us see that Peter isn’t simply asking for regret, but for a **conversion of the will**—a change in what we love and pursue.

#### **✠ St. Ambrose:**

In his exegesis, Ambrose underscores the **mercy of God in prophecy**, especially in verse 18:

“God fulfilled what He foretold through all the prophets, that His Messiah would suffer.” This shows that even Israel’s rejection did not thwart God’s plan—rather, it fulfilled it.

### **Repentance as the Doorway to Restoration**

Peter’s words in Acts 3:19 are pivotal:

“Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away.”

This is not merely a call to individual guilt; it’s a summons to **return to God**. In our age, repentance is often mischaracterized as negative or shame-driven. But in Catholic theology, **true repentance is liberating**—a grace-filled turning back to the Father who waits like the prodigal son’s father.

#### **Real-Life Justification:**

Consider the life of **St. Mary of Egypt**. She lived a life of grave sin, far from God. But one day, attempting to enter a church, she found herself mysteriously barred. Realizing her sin, she prayed before an icon of Our Lady and was allowed entry. That moment of **repentance** led to decades of penance and deep union with God in the desert. Her conversion wasn't punishment—it was liberation. Like the lame man, she stood up, spiritually healed.

Peter's sermon confronts a crowd that had been complicit in the crucifixion of Jesus, yet he doesn't cancel or condemn them. Instead, he calls them to **conversion** and reveals that **ignorance** can be healed by **truth** (v.17).

This refutes the modern notion that *sin is a mere construct or that guilt is unhealthy*. The Church teaches, with Peter, that **acknowledging sin is not the end, but the beginning** of healing. God does not abandon us in our guilt; He invites us to **confession, restoration, and mission**.

## **CONCLUSION**

Peter ends not with judgment, but promise:

“You are the heirs of the prophets... And God, having raised up his servant, sent him to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.” (v.25–26)

The moral principle of **repentance** is thus both a command and a **blessing**. It is not God's burden on us, but His **invitation to walk again**—like the healed man—leaping in the temple, praising God.

Let us imitate Peter: bold in truth, gentle in mercy, and always pointing not to ourselves, but to **Christ the Healer**.