

*Jesus' arrest and trial before the Sanhedrin and the denial of Peter.*

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

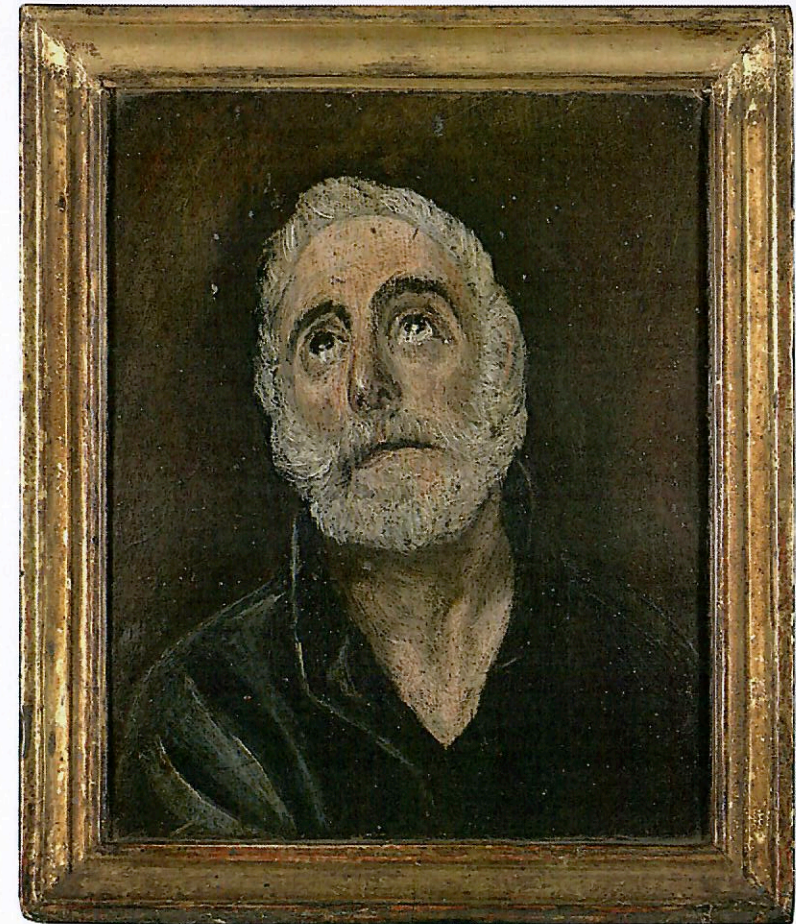
Lord Jesus, as we continue to journey with you on your way to the Cross, we ask that you strengthen our faith in you. You experienced rejection, denial, and abandonment even from your closest friends. There are times in our lives when we too can face these things. Let us remember the promise that you made to us – that you will be with us always. We ask that you keep our hearts and minds open to your will so that even in our most challenging moments we remember that you are by our side. We know that through your love and grace we can rise above the most trying moments by uniting ourselves to you. During your trial before the Sanhedrin, when you faced mockery, rejection, and violence, you continued to be at one with your Father in heaven. Help us to be an example to others of what it is to live out our faith with hope and joy, even during times of struggle.

We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen

Gospel Reading Matthew 26:67-75

Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they struck him, 'Prophecy to us, Christ! Who hit you then?'

Meanwhile, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him saying, 'You, too, were with Jesus the Galilean.' But he denied it in front of them all. 'I do not know what you are talking about,' he said. When he went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there, 'This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.' And again, with an oath, he denied it, 'I do not know the man.' A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, 'You are certainly one of them too! Why, your accent gives you away.' Then he started cursing and swearing, 'I do not know the man.' And at once the cock crowed, and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, 'Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times.'  
And he went outside and wept bitterly.



This picture of St Peter in the National Gallery has the format of a portrait, showing only head and shoulders against a dark background, but the intense and almost agonised expression suggests that it is more than a portrait. Straining upwards, looking at something beyond the picture; his eyes glisten with tears.

The focus is on Saint Peter's grief for having denied knowing Christ in order to protect himself after the latter's arrest. After his third denial 'the Lord turned and looked upon Peter', who 'went out and wept bitterly' (Luke 22: 61-62).

The scene emphasises the saint's humanity through his sin and remorse, the message for us is that with repentance comes forgiveness.