

Nobody wants to admit our failures, but each Lent the church invites us to do just that. Failures make us miserable. They set us back in school. They keep us from advancing at work. They leave us lonely in relationships. Nobody wants to admit failures, but we all have them. Having failures is normal. It's what we do with our failures that saves us or condemns us.

In Matthew's passion we meet three figures who all fail: Judas, Peter and Jesus. Jesus failed to convert everyone to his law of love. At the end of his life he prayed that God would take the cup of suffering away from him. On the cross his strength failed and his spirit failed. In spite of this failure, Jesus remained faithful to his Father. He intended to do the right thing and he did.

Peter promised to defend Jesus even unto death. But he failed. He denied he even knew Jesus. Peter intended to do the right thing, but he didn't. Eventually he returned to Christ, but there were times when he failed.

Judas never intended to do the right thing. He betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Later he regretted it, but even in his regret, Judas failed to seek God's mercy. Peter was a failure who converted, but Judas remained a failure.

Of these three figures we are all probably most like Peter. We intend to do the right thing, but sometimes we fail. God can still use us, flaws and all.

Each Lent the Church invites us to admit our failures. Having failures is normal. It's what we do with them that matters. If we turn back to Christ, we will find redemption.