

When a rock has been exposed to the elements for a couple of thousand years it tends to show a bit of wear and tear – indeed, to the point of being unrecognisable in some respects to its original onlookers – but its core constituents will be the same; it will be a rock subject still to the wear and tear of God's grace. *Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you...this knowledge of who I am: the Christ, Son of the living God.*

Once again we are looking at the dynamics of our faith, just what it is that powers it and makes it powerful, causes it to have an effect both on ourselves and others. How it is that when we allow it to affect us, so it necessarily affects others. In the recent film of *The Two Popes*, the filmmaker captures the essence of this Petrine ministry by focussing on the need each Pope has to re-source themselves from God. The heart of the film is the need both Popes have to confess their sin, their inadequacy in the role they've been called to play. Francis' soul is seemingly more accessible in this respect than Benedict's but the dynamic is the same. They are both rocks made up of that most basic of human ingredients – dust – and to dust they will return. Indeed, it's this very fragility that makes them of service to others; here to be worn away. Peter has yet to learn this as we see so sharply in the next pericope of the gospel where he fails to understand that Jesus is subject to the mercy of others; not here for his own sake but as an offering. This is the Petrine office at its best and, at its best, given to us all to follow.

Br John Mayhead
Monastery of Christ Our Saviour