Most Biblical commentators put Mark as the first of the gospels, and many suggest that the gospel writer knew Peter and received much of the content from St Peter.

That makes our gospel reading all the more poignant. It is quite possible that Peter is telling the story about himself, and against himself.

When you put your eggs in a single basket, as Peter did – with Jesus, you find yourself giving up other things that are important to you. You become very anxious that your leader succeeds. Peter gave up being a fisherman, but we also know that he had a mother-in-law, Paul describes him as travelling with is wife, and Clement of Alexandria speaks of his children and the martyrdom of his wife.

So, imagine, for a moment, the dilemma that he, and other apostles had, when Jesus comes along and asks them to follow him. Expats often make most difficult decisions with respect to families left in the UK, but at least, out of COVID, you can get a flight back when necessary. Not so easy for Peter. This is the other side of the coin, the holy and divine call and as with Christians of all persuasions over the last 2000 years, people have been faced with spending time with family or ministering in the name of Jesus.

Recall the rich young ruler who could not bring himself to leave his riches, the man who could not bring himself to miss his father’s funeral, or the man deciding to go back and inspect the newly bought cow in the field. For Peter with a family and responsibility, the decision was awful.

No more awful than that of Jesus. His family were not amused, they wanted him back. They go in search of him, read Mark 3, to get him back. He has the most difficult task of trying to tell them that his family is everyone and what family anywhere would understand that! It must have hurt. He and Peter, Andrew, James and John and so on, were professionals of the day, and suddenly the income would stop. How irresponsible!

I remember being told by a member of our not-immediate family to give up some of my preaching and do some gardening instead. It may well have been good advice! But it is a dilemma.

So Peter throws his lot in with Jesus. He becomes the leader of the church in Jerusalem after Jesus, this is no temporary position, the shoes of St Peter are for life. Watch the film, the Two Popes, and see how the job is for life.

So is it any wonder, when Jesus is as clear as can be that he is going to die that Peter, who has put all his eggs in this particular basket, who believes in Jesus, says ‘No way, Lord.’ If Jesus is to be in any way victorious, majestic, powerful, saviour of Israel, he must not die. Can you think of anyone who became any of those things by dying a tortured death on a cross? No, no, no, it is not reasonable. So Peter cries out.

Jesus goes through the same torture too. When God affirms his position, his ministry, his future, he needs the desert days to be changed, formed, cast into a new mould. And that is painful for him as it is painful for his family too.

Peter wants Jesus to use the power he has seen time and time again doing wonders beyond imagination, to become enthroned. Jesus can do it, he has the power to do it and cries out in Gethsemane if the easier alternative would be OK. Unwittingly Peter tempts Jesus to wield his mighty power and show them all. But that is not the call of God, just like it was not the call of God in the desert.

Peter believed in Jesus, but lacked trust. Jesus did not need clever thinking from Peter, good rhetoric or blind faith, Jesus needed Peter to trust him, that he had got it right.

Salvation individually, and of the nation and the world, required a trust (better word than faith) that the new way of doing things would be ultimately infinitely more successful than the majestic crowning of a tyrant. So we get the irony of the crown of thorns on the head of a dying man that changed the world, rather than the crown of gold on the head of Herod, Nero, Trump or Johnson.

Do you trust your politicians when they ask for it? Probably not, but do you trust Jesus that he has your life, this chaplaincy, this church, this world in his hands – come what may? That is the question for you this Lent. Trust God…