

The Perfect Shell



As my wife, Emma (our dog) and I walked along the beach, the sand was littered with broken sea shells. The morning was perfect, a cool breeze blowing through my beard, the sun rising across the ocean, salt water birds squawking and running across the sand and my best two companions by my side.

I immediately started scanning the beach for the perfect shell. In my many years visiting the beach, I was all too accustomed to pieces of shells in their different colors and shapes, but what I really wanted to find was a whole, completely intact conk shell. I vaguely remember as a boy riding in the back of dad's 49' Ford pickup truck, picking up conk shells along the surf. So my favorite sea shell is the conk because of these memories and I like the shape of this spiraling shell and I enjoy hearing the sound of the ocean when you put it up to your ear!

Well, on this day at this beach, the perfect shell was nowhere to be found. The rolling waves and undercurrents had tumbled and broken the whole shells and only delivered to tide's edge only the broken and leftover colorful polished pieces.

Now, in my walk with the Lord, I too at times am in search of the perfect shell. Remembering my many flaws and rejecting the many broken colorful pieces that I have become. We here in the scripture: *"For God did not send forth His Son into the world in order that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."* [Jn. 3:17] [Saint John Chrysostom](#) wrote that: *"because He loves mankind, for a long while, He pardons instead of making examination."* [Hom. 28, P.G. 59:159 (col. 162).]

Here in our church, the building is full of broken pieces of shells of people in many colors and

shapes. We have all been tumbled around by the currents of life and broken into pieces by our choices. What we long for is to be made whole again, to be made a perfect shell. But we often forget is that it is through our brokenness that we become useable in the hands of our Lord!

On our way back to the truck, Emma found the perfect shell. It was not a whole shell but merely only a piece. For her definition of a perfect shell was not the same as mine. She only wanted one that fit well in her mouth and was shaped like a short stick!

Surrender your life unto the Lord and your Father will polish your broken pieces into brilliance and place you on a lamp-stand to illuminate all those surrounding you! O Lord, forgive us of our countless sins and mold us, shape and polish us into what is useful in thy kingdom! Glory to Thee!

Fr. Gabriel Weller 8/22/13