

**Sunday 26 April 2020- John 21:15-19-Christ's
Resurrection restores our broken lives to full dignity!**

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Introduction:

It's been the third week now since Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples. Last Sunday, Jesus came and appeared to them a second time, on that

occasion especially to bring Thomas to repent of his unbelief and confess his faith. Now today Jesus appears to the disciples—seven of them, at least—he appears to them a third time, this time not in Jerusalem, as on the previous two occasions, but now back up in Galilee, the home base for many of the disciples.

Jesus appears to them, unexpectedly, while they're out on the lake in a boat, fishing, and he's standing on the shore, standing by a charcoal fire he had made. They don't know that it's Jesus, but He calls them.

Jesus invites the disciples to share breakfast with him around a charcoal fire. There is only one other scene in John where there is a charcoal fire, and it also involves three pronouncements from Peter about Jesus. That was the time when Peter denied knowing Jesus after His arrest. Peter was asked three times about his allegiance or love for Jesus and he failed...miserably. **“Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me more than these?”**

It probably caused Peter great distress, to be asked that particular question. He knew he didn't have a great track record. He knew his actions of cowardice and fear might certainly speak louder than words. But Jesus didn't ask the question once; no...he asked it three times and each time Peter's heart broke a bit more. Each time Peter responded by saying: **“Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”** And after each response, Jesus commissioned Peter with these words, **“Feed my sheep!”** . Here, Jesus gives him

three opportunities to profess fidelity. And then, in response to those three professions of love and faith, Jesus neither congratulates him nor offers forgiveness. Rather, he gives him good work to do. **“Feed my sheep!”** In short, Jesus’ resurrection restores Peter’s full dignity and calls him to a life of purposeful service, witness, and sacrifice.

Jesus, in dealing with Peter, doesn’t just take Peter’s word for it; he wants a response, an action, some positive certainty that the message has been heard and understood. And what Christ asks of Peter is also asked of you and me. **“Do you love me?”** if we say yes- **Put your love into play...make it work, make it real, make it felt, live it out, experience it and see how it is being experienced in the lives of others. *Feed my sheep.***

God stops us in our tracks with that question.
“Do you love me?”

And especially during Lockdown-do we still Love Him, now that we felt that things doesn’t go the way we want it and the fear and uncertainty of the future.

But, no matter how much we love Him, we can never love Him enough. Our love for Him can never match His wondrous love for us, a love which led His Son to die on the cross and be buried in the grave.

How about you? Have you denied your Lord, like Peter did? Or are you thinking you’re better than Peter? No,

that's not true. I've been just like him, too many times, denying Christ by my words and actions, surrendering to the pressures of the world. Denying him also by my failures to speak, and by my inactions. Like Simon Peter, you and I have denied our Lord Jesus more times than we can count. Some in particular may stand out in our minds and memory, like those times when Peter was in the courtyard.

But the good news today is this: Jesus is calling you over to himself, by the charcoal fire. Hear his voice, and come and receive your forgiveness. Jesus is restoring you today. No matter how many times you have fallen, Jesus will pick you up. He is restoring you to himself, and he has some good work for you to do, which he will bless. He will bless whatever he is calling you to do, in his name, according to your vocation in life—in church, at home, at work, in your family, in your community.

And Jesus has something to give you, to give you strength as you go on to serve in his name. Children, do you have anything to eat? Yes, you do. **I am the Bread of life- I am the Living water.** Jesus has it already laid out for you. It is his holy Body and Blood, given for you to eat and to drink in his Blessed Sacrament.

Conclusion:

Easter is the wrapped up gift of God's love for us...a true offering of patient, caring love. On the cross, Christ gave

himself to free us from our doubts, our fears, our shame, our guilt. And our response? Our response is to offer ourselves to others in love and with a forgiving compassion. To wrap others up in the care of God's compelling love – feed my sheep. We are loved and therefore, we can love others in Christ's name.

God never lets go of us and never gives up on us, so how can we give up on Him? There is forgiveness, caring, and healing in God's love for us. We have this witness – **Christ has died-Christ risen-Christ will come again!** Now, go and feed my sheep. **Amen.**