

3 Sunday Easter C 2016
April 9-10
Frazee/Callaway

Mary, our Mother, we give our selves totally to you as your possession and property. Please make of us, of all that we have and are, whatever most pleases you. Let us be fit instruments, in your holy and immaculate hands, for bringing the greatest possible glory to God. Amen

YOU

Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Do you love me?"

Most of us received the faith by proxy. We were baptized as infants and our parents responded to the profession of faith for us. They were asked, "Do you believe in God?" And they said, "I do!" All the while we were sucking on a bottle.

We were incompetent and passive. Our parents and Godparents did all the professing and promising. They professed the Catholic faith and they promised to share it with us.

Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Do YOU love me?" At some point the faith needs to become personal. We claim it as our own and with live it will all of our strength. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ wants us to fall in love with him! We meet him in the Sacred Scriptures and in prayer. We meet him in the celebration of the Sacraments and in Christian service, especially to the poor and the poor in spirit.

Do you remember a few years ago the Roman Missal was revised? Before that when we said the creed at Mass we said, "We believe..." Now we say, "I believe..."

Some of you will be confirmed in the faith next weekend. Bishop Hoepfner will anoint you with oil and say "Be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit." You and only you will respond, "Amen!" "I believe."

LOVE

This gospel passage is filled with synonyms. There are two words used "know." Simon Peter says, "Lord, you know that I love you," and "Lord, you know everything..." There were two words used ovine—sheep and lambs. There are two words used for shepherding—tend and feed. There are two words used for love—phelio and agape. When Jesus asks Simon Peter, "Do you love me?" he is using agape. This is unconditional, irrevocable sacrificial love. Simon Peter responds, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He uses the word phelio. Phelio connotes the fondness and enjoyment of friendship.

Jesus clarifies, "Amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

The third time Jesus asks the question, “Simon do you love me?” Jesus uses phelio. Jesus accepts what we can offer. But if we seek Jesus, we will always want and need to offer more. Our love will not be complete until he has all of us, that is every one of us and every part of each of us.

You know the selfishness that is still in you. You know the parts of yourself you want to reserve for yourself. Jesus wants only one thing—we wants us all.

ME

Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Do you love ME?”

This is a true story. My friend Abbie had a first date with Andrew. Andrew was in his thirties and he was feeling the clock ticking. He wanted very badly to be married and to be a daddy. In the course of this first date he explained to Abbie his goals. He also shared that in the last three months he had had dates with three different ladies. He explained, “I would have married any one of them!” There was no second date.

Andrew needed to learn that there are two things to be discerned. He needed to discern if his vocation is to marriage. He would then need to further discern if he is called to marry Abbie! To conceive of marriage without being married to a specific person is a fantasy. To believe that the woman to whom marriage is contracted is extraneous to the sacrament is naive and immature.

Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Do you love ME?”

It is possible for us to be in love with the notion of a God, to believe in a higher power, a generic, ethereal diety. When there is only one God any other god is false and an idol.

Remember that this is a resurrection appearance. Jesus had spent three years teaching and revealing his identity as the Son of God. He had undergone his passion—his suffering, death and resurrection. Jesus revealed himself as a servant and as the crucified one. So he asked Simon Peter, “Do you love ME?”

The question ought not be answered too quickly. Our response ought to be filled with awe and even trepidation. If we respond favorable, Jesus will have permission to take our lives and do with them as he wills.

DO YOU LOVE ME?