

Third Sunday of Easter

April 18, 2010

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Good morning. This Wednesday will be my 21st anniversary of my ordination. I always have the, it seems like we just had the 20th. Anyway I always have mass up at the Carmelites that morning, well the 22nd is my ordination date is the 21st, but the 22nd is the anniversary of my first mass. My mother comes up and it is the 8 o'clock Mass. After communion I kneel down in front of the image of Our Lady and the sisters sing in Latin, Salve Regina and I rededicate my priesthood to our Blessed Mother. But when I was ordained this Gospel today, my first Mass was up at the Carmelites Monastery and I chose this Gospel for my first Mass. This is the one I felt most the Lord was saying to me and what He wanted me to do in priesthood. That is why my mother got me for my ordination for my first mass and it has Feed My Sheep right on it and there is Jesus with the Lamb, holding Him close to His heart. So in today's Gospel there are three things we focus on in the words of Jesus – a question, a command, and then a prophecy. A question, a command, and then a prophecy.

The first thing Jesus does when He talking to Peter, we are talking about the second half of this Gospel today, is He looks at him with a very simple question that He is asking each of us today. It is simple, but oh how we answer it. He says, "Do you love Me? Do you love Me?" Now He asks this of Peter three times because Peter denied Him three times. Think how many times you'd have to ask us that for all the times we denied Him with our sin? That is all we would be doing for some of us. Well me, not you. I am the only one here that sins, I guess. The reality, if He asked me every time I have ever denied Him to try to make it up – "Larry do you love Me? Larry do you love Me? Larry do you love Me? Larry do you love Me?" He asks that of each of us. Very simple. He is just asking you this Sunday, do you love Him?

And I am guessing since we are all here this Sunday we would all say, "Well yes Lord. You know that I love You." And then He doesn't let it go because it isn't enough to tell Jesus that we love Him. Well He says if you love Me what do you got to do? Feed My Sheep. If you love Me, I want you to prove that you love Me. And the way that you prove that you love Me is by feeding others with My word; is by bringing others to me; is by going out and taking care of other people. That is how we do it. Now each of us will do that in a different way with our families. I do it with my preaching. That is my primary thing. I can't do everything. You know I can't do everything. If the one way like the Holy Father, the way the Holy Father loves you and me as the Holy Father is he commands us, he leads the Church. He doesn't deal with each and every one of us. And again everyone is going to do it in a different way. My primary way of feeding the sheep is by preaching. Primary thing and that is what Christ asks of me. I knew that would be it from the very beginning, to feed my sheep. But what He says to me is you have got to do something Larry. You just can't sit and do nothing and say here I am. I love You, Jesus. For me He said you have to write books, you have got to go preaching, you got to go to this, you got to do that and you have got to do that. Yes Lord, Yes Lord, Yes Lord. What is He asking of you when He says today, "Do you love Me?" - because He is asking something. And what is it? I can't tell you myself, but you know it. But you have got to do it. That is the way you and I prove that we love God.

We are in the middle of a TEC retreat next door. We have all of these kids and they are doing well by God's grace. We have someone who came all of the way from Puerto Rico to make this TEC. As they are come up and they are dealing with this, the main thing about making TEC is to discover Christ. Like I said to them yesterday, "Listen an emotional experience of Christ doesn't count, sorry. You know you can feel all good when you go on a retreat and it is all la la, and I love you and you love me. What is going to count whether you really love Jesus is if when you walk out of this place is that you are going to love Him even when you don't feel like it. You are going to take care of others even when you don't feel like it. Even when no one is saying oh you are so good and it is so good you love Jesus. Even when nobody notices, when nobody cares, you do what you do because you love Jesus. So often people will do things for the church or do volunteer work as long as they are getting patted on the back. Well, that is why I do it. Well that isn't really why I do it but you appreciate it. Well will you do it when nobody cares except for God? Why do we do the work that we do? Why do we volunteer? Why do we go out of our way? Do we do it because I love Him or do we do it for other reasons?

So Jesus is calling each of us one way or another to prove that we love Him by doing something for others for the love of Jesus. One of the things you can do is at work. Let us say you don't like your job. You sit there and you have got to do it to keep your family in food correct? So you sit there at work every day and you say, "Jesus, I don't like doing this but I do it today for love of You." Then you make your day and the thing that you don't like to do you make it an act of love for Jesus. It is a simple thing. Jesus I do this today for love of you and we make it an act of love. It can be a wonderful thing.

So the first thing He asks is a question, do you love Me? The second thing He does is give us a command, Feed My Sheep. And the third thing He does to poor Peter is He gives a prophecy. And what is the prophecy? "When you were young you did what you wanted Peter. But as you grow old" and this is for all disciples not only those over fifty, now that you are old He says, "you are going to do what you would rather not do. You are going to put out your hands, someone else is going to tie you and lead you where you would rather not go." And then He says, "and in this way you are going to glorify God." And so for each of us. When we come to Jesus and we give our lives to Him, He is going to lead us where we would rather not go.

Most of you know by now I had to put Rudy down on Monday. When I am putting Rudy down I am sitting there, it was the most horrendous thing I have done in my life. I was talking to Fr. Michael, because I could not do it myself. I had to call Fr. Michael Kesicki to help me. I was sitting there all the way up, I was hoping, I kept praying first of all for Rudy to be healed. God said no. I wasn't very happy with that. Then I said, "Okay God, what I want you to do is just take Rudy during the night because I am not going to put him down. You are going to just let him die while he is sleeping, okay?" He didn't do that either. God said no. Then I said Paul and Bernie have him. You take him while he is over Paul and Bernie's house so I don't have to deal with it. Put it on them. God said no. So I get a call and Cheryl says you have got to call Paul. So I call Paul, he called the doctor of course, to make an appointment, how nice, so I could put Rudy down that night at 7 o'clock. Thank you. All the way up I am screaming at God, "I asked you to do this, I asked you to this, and I asked you to do that and You said no, no, no." I called Fr. Michael and said I cannot do this myself so Fr. Michael picked me up and we took him. I am yelling at Michael. I said, "You know I asked Jesus to do this, this and this." Michael says, "God said no. Deal with it Larry!" But God had a different plan and I am so glad it worked out that way even though it was very hard. I could be there with Rudy. I could hold him. I could hug him. I could comfort him. I could bury him.

That was not my plan. I had to do something that I didn't want to do. That I fought about doing. But when you are going to follow Jesus you are going to do it His way and not yours.

And that is in many different things in our lives. You know we have our plans and this is what we are going to do and God takes it away from us. And we are thinking what are you doing to me God? This is the way we will glorify God by doing what we would rather not do. We glorify Him in that. It is going to happen to all of you if you haven't gotten it yet. Day in or day out will you do it your way or will you do it God's way? He is saying do it My way. You might not like it but I will bring glory out of it. So today Jesus says three things to you and me. He asks you, "Do you love Me?" He commands you if you do then do something about it. And He makes a prophecy about you and me that you use to do what you wanted to do, now you are going to do what I am asking you to do. You are going to put out your hands and you are going to be led where you would rather not go. But when you do that you glorify me. You got it? Get it? Going to do it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.