

## **Do you love me? .... Feed my lamb!**

Today the third Sunday of Easter, we are still being invited to reflect on the facts of Jesus' resurrection, his victory over sin, Satan, and death, the foundation and crowning of our Christian faith. Jesus himself did not play with this all-important message. Hence, he took time after his resurrection to clear every doubt about it and strengthen his disciples so that they would become faithful witnesses of the facts of the resurrection. The after-effects of Christ's efforts are the contents of the book of the Acts of Apostles, which we read through the season of Easter in our first reading.

Today, John's gospel tells us about Jesus' appearance to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias and all the events. The post-resurrected mission of Christ showed his patience. Jesus knew he needed the disciples to reaffirm and re-profess their faith in him. Last Sunday, we read Thomas reaffirming his faith by saying, "my Lord and my God." Today he speaks directly to the head of the disciples. He wanted him to reaffirm that faith he professed earlier in the gospel when he said: "Lord to whom shall we go, you have the message of eternal life" (Jn 6: 68-69). Thus, Jesus asked Peter three times, do you love me? Peter answered him yes three times and with a complaint in the third answer. Maybe Jesus wanted him to answer three times to contradict his triple denial of him. Jesus, in each case, challenged him to feed his lamb. This we see in the Acts of the Apostles. As we read in the first reading, Peter courageously led the other disciples in being witnesses. He bravely said: "we must obey rather than men." The timid and fearful men turned to become courageous. Love overcomes any fear. The love of God will always urge us to create things for God and others (2 Cor 5: 14-15).

We gather in the Eucharist to celebrate the unique presence of God among us and to encounter him. Jesus calls on every one of us and asks us by our name if we love him. Do you love me? I believe that we all say yes to this question, but we also must listen to the different aspects of our lives he calls us to feed his lamb. That is, to become a faithful witness to this love. Love is well-spoken every time. But the question is always how we allow this love we express verbally to influence our decisions and the judgments we make in our day-to-day life. The yes, we say to God's invitation to his love strengthens us to brace up the courage to rise after our fall as Peter did and not see ourselves as failures when we fail. The truth remains that we fail doesn't mean that we are failures, but our failures are steppingstones for our success in life. We remember that the greatest way to express our love for God is to love our fellow men and women. Not because they merit our love always, but more because of the image of God in them. (Matt. 25: 40,45 Jn 13: 35). This love spreads to how we treat, talk, and relate to one another. Let us ask the good Lord to help us know different aspects of our lives; he invites us to respond practically to his love. Amen.