



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



May 21st, 2010 – Last School Mass

Gospel Jn 21:15-19

After Jesus had revealed himself to his disciples and eaten breakfast with them, he said to Simon Peter,

“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”

Simon Peter answered him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

He then said to Simon Peter a second time,

“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

Simon Peter answered him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

He said to him, “Tend my sheep.”

He said to him the third time,

“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was distressed that he had said to him a 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.

Amen, 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.”

He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God.

And when he had said this, he said to him, “Follow me.”

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Today is the last time this school year that we will gather together for the Eucharist; today is the last day of classes for this school year. It is a time for summing up.

That is what Jesus is doing with his Apostles in the gospel we just heard, although the Apostles don't realize it.

In St. John's Gospel, it appears that after the Resurrection, the Apostles went back to Galilee and Peter to his fishing business. They appear confused, not knowing what to do or how to do it.

And Jesus appears to them for the third time, the first since they left Jerusalem, and tells them where to drop their nets and so they make a big catch.

When they realize it is Jesus, they are excited. Peter even jumps overboard to be the first ashore.



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



But when they all reach the shore with their miraculous catch of fish, they ask for no explanation from Jesus, and he doesn't ask them or remonstrate them for going back to fishing.

What comes first...

He says "You're hungry. Have some breakfast." So he makes them breakfast. Right there on the sea of Galilee...God cooks breakfast for his friends.

Only after they had eaten does Jesus get down to business with Simon Peter, the one who had denied him, who had abandoned him and run away, who had now returned to his fishing business in Galilee.

What comes first...

Jesus asks Peter about love, nothing else.

Three times Jesus asks, once for each of the three times had Peter denied him the day He was crucified – "Do you love me?"

And three times Jesus tells Peter what to do. Feed them, my lambs and my sheep. Make breakfast for them, like I made breakfast for you.

What a revelation.

So personal and simple, so earthy was God's message to Peter and is God's message to us.

If you love me, if you would follow me and be a Christian, keep my commandments.

And Jesus made it very clear the night before he died that his commandments are all about love. Love one another as I have loved you.

Jesus called his disciples from mundane and some from sinful occupations to follow him. Jesus patiently taught them for three years, answered their obtuse questions, settled their quarrels, defended them from unjust criticism. He shared with them whatever he had and what was given to him.

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, He fed them and he died for them. That's how he loved them. That's how he asked them to love each other, and if we say we are followers of Jesus Christ, that's how he asks us to love each other and how he asks us to love our neighbor.

You just have to look at Jesus life to know it's not easy, it's not easy to love. Our neighbors, the sick, the poor, the stupid, the imprisoned, the addicted – all those



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



neighbors are not always or even usually grateful. It doesn't matter to God, so why is it so important for us ?

Sometimes they don't even realize they are sick, poor, stupid, addicted or imprisoned by their sins and faults. It doesn't matter to God, so why is it so important for us ?

They are often unpleasant, angry, undeserving, smelly and disgusting in appearance. It doesn't matter to God, so why is it so important for us ?

What comes first ? Are we followers of Christ or not ? So personal and simple, so earthy was Gods message to Peter and is God's message to us.

We ask too many questions sometimes fishing for answers that will excuse us. We appear confused, hesitant in our faith and commitment, not knowing what to do or how to do it

What got Peter and the Apostles out of deep water and on to the very ground of their being ? What got them moving ? The Holy Spirit.

This Sunday we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the Church, and so upon us, the spirit of wisdom, knowledge and understanding. You could not have a better week in which to take exams than the week following the coming of the Holy Spirit . The same Holy Spirit that moved the Apostles may move you.

But it isn't luck; it is a blessing.

You do not have to leave everything now, as the Apostles did. Your work, your vocation now, is to learn and study, to acquire knowledge and understanding, to discover what you can intellectually about the way you are called to live a life of love.

It's a blessing, because the Holy Spirit is love, and nothing teaches love like love.

The following Sunday, when exams are over and the Seniors graduate, is the feast of the Holy Trinity, the fullness of God, and for us at Priory that is the fullness, the completion of all of our work and effort this year.

But There is next year, not far away, and others years of study to come.

Jesus final words to Peter are a reminder to us: When you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow older, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you. May that someone be Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Eventually you must stop fishing; it will be time for you to put to work all the love you have learned as other Christ's in our world, which still has so many people who so badly need feeding and saving.

And you are just the people to do it.

May the Holy Spirit guide you through your exams and through a creative and refreshing summer and bring you back stronger, wiser and more filled with grace.

Laus Tibi Domine.