

FR. JOHN'S HOMILY
3rd Sunday of Easter, May 1, 2022

This is a Happy Day for many of our children receiving their First Communion. We talked about the difference of the consecrated host and unconsecrated host. They know the difference, that when the Priest prays over the gifts of bread and wine, it becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus. Saying "Amen" to the body of Christ means that we are to become the bread we eat. These children on this First Communion weekend begin this beautiful journey of being more like Jesus.

In the first grade I learned that God made me. And the next question is why God made me. Why did He make you? - God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven. This is why God made us, and today as you receive Jesus as the Bread of Life, you will always have this call, mission in life to "*Know, Love and Serve Jesus*".

We are reminded in this Easter Season that we are an Easter People with an Easter message to proclaim. What is the Easter Message? Well, today you receive the Risen Lord in the Eucharist, when you say "Amen," then we are called to be messengers of the Light of the Risen Christ. This is the Easter message.

Like St. Francis of Assisi's prayer, in the prayer you can see that Francis loved Jesus with all his heart, and he served Jesus every day. His prayer is "*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace*". And in the prayer look how he lived out the Risen Christ: "**where there is hatred, let me sow love, where there is doubt, faith, where there is despair, hope, where there is darkness, light, and where there is sadness, joy**". Francis shows us how to live the Easter message.

The Easter message being that the Risen Christ in us, with us, and desiring to live through us, we can go as his children to share the good news. The good news that Jesus is alive. This is what Jesus is reassuring His Apostles in the Gospel today, especially with His Apostle Peter.

We can recap before we get to this passage in John today with Risen Christ and Peter. Remember Peter was the leader of the Apostles. Jesus gave Peter the Keys to the Kingdom. Peter said he would die for Jesus. Yet when he was confronted in the courtyard, once by a young lady, who was no threat to him, he denied he knew Jesus. Three times he denied he knew Jesus. Jesus suffered, died, was buried, and three days later was Risen. Now He is appearing to them to teach them that He is Alive, and His words are true, "*I am with you always to the end the Earth*". But before Peter could be open to receive Jesus's Easter

message, Jesus knew that Peter would need to be healed, freed, loved and called.

Now in the passage today, we see Peter and the Apostles who have gone back to fishing. Even after Jesus has appeared to them two other times. They still are at a point of not knowing what to believe. We don't see any change in their lives. You have to know Jesus before you can love Him; the more you love Him the more you want to know Him. And once this begins then our hearts will flow into service. We are called to *"Know, Love and Serve Jesus"*.

If you remember last week, I said there are two great enemies of the Easter season: Fear and Doubt. We will read about it all during the Easter Season. Just like us, we too fall into fear and doubts, and Jesus comes to us, saying *"Peace be with you."* And to reassure them once again, today in John's Gospel we hear of Jesus eating with them. No ghost can get food. Jesus ate with his apostles. *"I am with you, do not be afraid. I am here always to be with you, to live with you, and to take my place in your heart if you will allow me."*

So now Jesus takes this time after breakfast to visit with Peter. And He asks him this question, three times. *"Peter, do you love me more than these?"* Peter responded, *"Yes Lord, you know that I love you."* And each time Jesus says, *"Feed my lambs, tend my Sheep, Feed my Sheep."* This is referring to being a shepherd after Jesus own heart. Jesus is saying to Peter, *"Peter I will be ascending to my Father, but I will always be with you. As I go, be my Shepherd here on Earth. You Peter let the People know I am always with them."*

Now Peter would to the very end of his life be the Shepherd after Jesus's own Heart. Jesus' power, strength, nourishment came right here upon this altar, in the Eucharist. Jesus as the Bread of Life. He would show his love for Jesus up to his own crucifixion. Yet tradition says, Peter asked to be crucified upside down, he was unworthy to die like his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Just as these Apostles, especially Peter today, the Eucharist, the Mass is our moment to experience the Risen Christ. We can have our own resurrection appearances stories. It is our moment at the table with the Lord. It is the time to receive the peace of Christ and to commit ourselves to share that peace. Jesus is with us in the Eucharist. He is alive and shares his life with us. Just as Peter and Francis and all the saints, gave witness to Jesus in their lives, so too must we when we say *"Amen"* to the Body of Christ.