

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, May 17th 2024

The Gospel text focuses on the figure of Simon Peter. The evangelist specifies the role of the apostle Peter in the community that Jesus wants to establish: he is called to feed and tend the sheep of the Lord and to bear witness to Christ through his life. The Gospel according to John recovers, so to speak, the role of Peter in the key of love. Only the one who loves can shepherd the flock gathered by love. Only he who responds to the love of Christ is capable of being responsible for his flock.

Jesus, therefore, before entrusting Peter with the charge of Shepherding the Church, invites him to a confession of love. The three-fold question of "Do you love me more than these," seemed to balance Peter's triple denial of Jesus during his trial. The sin of Peter provided the context for what would follow. Jesus does not reproach him for anything. Just insist on love. This insistence of Jesus can be interpreted as the condition to establish a relationship of communion, of friendship, of sonship that Peter has to have with the Lord.

Pastoral ministry is not a position of prestige and power but a vocation to experience the intimate love of the Lord and to share that love and compassion of the Lord with one's brothers and sisters.

Peter, who is purified in the fire of forgiveness, could humbly say "Lord, You know everything; You know that I love you "(Jn 21:17). I am sure that all of us can say it from the heart "(Homily of Pope Francis, Thursday 23 May 2013)

The mission of the Church and of each of her disciples is always carried out in the following of Jesus, which begins when we answer his question: "Do you love me?" «Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you». This beautiful text of the Gospel reminds us that both the love Jesus has for us and the love we profess for him, passes through the care of others. The Holy Spirit grants us the grace to remain lovingly in following Jesus.

Lord, our God, you have appointed shepherds in your Church to speak your word to us and to build community in your name. May they be shepherds like your Son who look for those who have lost the way, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. May they all be ministers of your tender love and service, as Jesus was, your Son and our Lord.