# Friday of the Seventh Week of Easter

**Gospel text (*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.”

***“Do you love me more than these?”***

Fr. Habel JADERA
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Today, Gospel tells us another story of Jesus’ appearance to His disciples. Intensely, the dialogue between Jesus and Peter illustrates God's mercy as a great love for the disciples and the world. This is not a common dialog between Jesus and His disciple, Peter. Both Jesus and Peter talk about love according to their perspectives. Jesus’ three questions “do you love me more than these?” could be seen as His act of reaffirming Peter's twofold status. As a disciple who loves Him more than others do, and as a disciple who loves Him more than he loves his fellow disciples. Indeed, Jesus’ great act of love requires a depth response from Peter.

By answering “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you”, Simon seems to understand his three times failures in denying Jesus, Son of God who stands in front of him, who says to the disciples “do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid”, “peace be with you” (cf. Jn 14:27; 20:19).

Jesus concludes this important dialog with the affirmation of Peter's task and the authorities which have been given before (cf. Mt 16:18-20). Especially, when Jesus said, “Tend my sheep.” Regarding this

fulfillment of Jesus' commissions, it requires an extraordinary love, the love that is missionary in spirit. This missionary love must be going forth, as Pope Francis says: “love creates bonds and expands existence, for it draws people out of themselves and towards others.”

Jesus ensures this basic characteristic of love that is missionary to be His shepherds: To love Him more than anything. Finally, as Jesus' disciples, we are all called to guarantee that the “law of ecstasy” is operated. As Francis notes: “the lover ‘goes outside’ the self to find a fuller existence in another”. Missionary love encourages us of moving beyond ourselves!

## *Thoughts on Today's Gospel*

- “Love is not a matter of miracles but simply of virtue: ‘Love is the fulfilling of the Law’ (Rom 13:10). Love each other and thus you will be like the apostles, you will be in first place” (Saint John Chrysostom)

- “‘Do you love?’ has a universal significance, an enduring value. It builds, in the history of humanity, the world of good” (Saint John Paul II)

- “Jesus entrusted a specific authority to Peter (...). The ‘power of the keys’ designates authority to govern the house of God, which is the Church. Jesus, the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11), confirmed this mandate after his Resurrection: ‘Feed my sheep’ (Jn 21,15:17)” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 553)

## *Other comments*

***“Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep”***

Fr. Joaquim MONRÓS i Guitart
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Today, we should be grateful to St. John for having left with us the evidence of an intimate dialogue between Jesus and 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.” (Jn 21:15). —From the smallest ones, newly born to the Grace of God... you must take care, as if you were Myself... When a second time... «Jesus said to him, ‘Look after my sheep’», He is actually telling Simon Peter: —You must guide all those who follow me in my Love, and you must see to it they all have the charity ordained. Thus, through you, everyone will realize they are following Me; for it is my Will you go always first, while administering the merits that —for each one— I have gained.

“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."" (Jn 21:17). His triple denial makes him rectify, and just remembering it, saddens him. —I truly love you despite I denied you..., you know how much I have regretted my betrayal, you know how much I found consolation by being with your Mother and brothers.

I find consolation in remembering that the Lord established the power to forgive sins that separate us, whether a little or a lot, from his Love and the love to our brothers. —I find consolation when admitting the truth of my distancing from You while feeling from your priestly lips the "I absolve you" "by way of judgment".

We find consolation in the power of those keys Jesus Christ confers to his priests-ministers, to open again the doors to his friendship. —Lord, I see that indifference can be arranged by a more intense act of love. It makes us altogether evaluate the immense joy of the Sacrament of forgiveness to confess our sins, which are really a "lack of love".