

Jesus Delivers the Office of Shepherd to Peter

(Eph 2:1-10 / Jn 21:15-19)



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

Put your name in the place of Peter, what will be your answer?

Peter denied Jesus three times. Jesus said to him: "This very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." This answer came after Peter said: “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”

A rooster announced the denial of Peter at the third time. Jesus him- self didn't blame Simon Peter, however the rooster did, what Jesus asked was about love.

No blame, no grudge and no attacks, these were the job assignment of the rooster.

My dear brothers and sisters when you have something against some- one, use these kinds of questions: “do you love me, do you still think of me, do you like my company...”

Even in front of your most undesirable enemy try to use these questions. When you love, your words cannot be something else than love, even for the people who don't love you. Our letter to the Ephesians states:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.”

Jesus asked him the same questions three times. You denied, betrayed me three times, now these are three rockets of love sent back to you.

Jesus did totally the opposite of what the old testament states in Exodus: “But if there is further injury, the punishment must match the injury: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise.”

Because of that, now we can understand why Peter felt hurt, Jesus overwhelmed him with his love.

It is not like your wife asking you, nagging repeatedly: “do you love me”, however they have the right to say it, if the other part of the sentence is present: “more than these?” (the other women)

Jesus' questions were asked to tell Peter about his reality, that he is a human being, limited and weak. Ephesians continued saying “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God not because of works, lest any man should boast.”

Peter please stop boasting, stop showing off, like a rooster crowing, or a turkey. You have a lot of them here, I mean in Alabama, not in our Church, sure. Relax little bit and rely not on who you are but on who I am.

Our biggest problem my dear friends is not with anybody, it is with our body, with ourselves.

What do I mean by that? Peter has a leadership personality, he is passionate, he likes to be first in everything, his hand is always on his sword, ready for any attack. His name itself, Peter the zealot, the rock, describes the kind of person he was... All of these are good qualities but if they are not grafted, implanted in Jesus Christ, they will be wild, they will fade away and withered as fast as they come.

Everything is a gift of God, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Peter stop boasting and fighting for the wrong cause I need your talents, charisma and persona to be put on the right cause.

Many are following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

But you Peter, you must follow one person, and our Gospel passage ended by: "Follow me"

I conclude with this final thought: how beautiful that after each similar question Jesus asked, we have the same answers from Peter: "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Then after each response, Jesus' commands were the same: "feed my lambs, my sheep."

When did all this conversation with Peter happen? It happened after they finished the breakfast, the one that we talked about last Sunday about the miraculous catch of the fish.

Jesus prepared a delicious breakfast for his disciples, on this morning, the grilled fish, you remember? Not chicken (rooster), he did his assignment, crowing three times, he was saved, so after fishing all night not catching anything, and being hungry, now Jesus is asking Peter to feed his sheep. It is now his turn to feed after experiencing the lack of food, the starvation and being fed by Jesus.

This is our mission as well; you cannot feed if you are not well fed. The rule of the heavenly food, the Eucharist, is opposed to the earthly one, what I do mean?

The more the people in the world feed themselves only from earthly food, they store and accumulate more than they need, they deprive others from their right of these resources (food) and they put them in a starving situation, leading them to death (poverty each year is escalating, rising) However, the more we feed ourselves from the heavenly food the more we can feed others (God's sheep) giving them life.

My message for you today is: "watch your diet following Jesus' menu."

Are you afraid, a liar and a traitor? Do you know that whatever you are, God's love greatly exceeds your failures?