



Homily for
THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
9/10 April, 2016

Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....

I. I think there are few scenes in the scriptures more tender, more intimate, more touching than this one from the gospel of John.

- imagine the setting....it's dawn, it's a beach, somewhere along the sea of Tiberias...it could just as well be Finley's landing...imagine a scene along the Mississippi...it's dawn on an early summer day...the disciples are coming in from fishing over night...Jesus has a charcoal fire going...grilling some fish and warming some bread...and the disciples come in bringing some fish.....

- you are one of the disciples...what do you see?

- you gather with the disciples...taking some of the fish and bread Jesus has prepared...there's hardly any talking...this is the third time you've seen Jesus since his death and resurrection...so you all know it is the risen Jesus...basically you all just eat, maybe looking over at Jesus once in-awhile wondering what he'll do next.

- after breakfast, everyone is cleaning up, putting things away, Jesus comes over

to you and says, “Mike, Carol, Marilyn, Kevin...do you love me?”

- what do you say? Do the words catch in your throat? Most likely, you would manage to softly say, “Yes, Lord, I love you.”

- and then Jesus asks a second time and then a third time...and each time it gets harder to say, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”

II. It’s hard to say, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you,” because we know love carries a consequence. If we say we love someone, especially Jesus, then that means we need to follow through with our deeds. Love has to be more than words – it must be lived in action. If you say to someone you love them, then they will expect you mean it and will show it by following through.

To Peter, Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” “Tend my sheep.” “Feed my sheep.” To Peter, Jesus was saying if you love me then follow through by helping to take care of my sheep, my little ones, those who are needy and helpless and need your support. Show your love to me.

For Peter that meant:

- he would soon find the courage to announce to the world that Jesus is risen!
- like Jesus, he would be healing and bringing hope to the ill and down-trodden
- Peter would be challenged to think outside the box: that Jesus’ message is meant for all people, not only the Jews
- Peter’s commitment of love for Jesus would incur the wrath of authorities in Jerusalem and eventually in Rome

- finally, Peter's affirmation of love would lead to a death he would not choose: *Peter would learn to give his all for Jesus*

III. So what about you and me?

What are the consequences of our affirmation of love? Where will this lead?

How are you and I commissioned to show our love?

As a friend, a parent, a spouse, a brother, a sister...a disciple of Jesus: how do you, and will you, give witness to your love for Jesus?

Our affirmation of love has consequences:

- in time we may come to learn our commitment will demand more and more and more of us
- by listening to God's will for us, we may travel down roads we never expected
- we may find ourselves serving complete strangers: the poorest of the poor, the weakest of the weak, the most vulnerable among us
- like Peter, our love for Jesus may drain every ounce of life out of us

IV. But also, we eventually learn that our commitment to love is worth it. It may well be a journey filled with risk, danger, suffering, great challenges – but in the end, it will be worth every minute.

As it was centuries ago, Jesus has prepared a meal for us – not fish and bread, but bread and wine which become for us his Body and Blood – his love poured out for us. It is this meal which carries us forward, nourishes us for the journey, gives us

strength and hope. This meal will take us to the eternal Eucharistic banquet.

So, Jesus says to you: do you love me?

How do you respond?

Fr. Kyle's homily follows....

Author and playwright Oscar Wilde once claimed “the difference between a saint and a sinner is that every saint has a past while every sinner has a future”. This statement is seen quite clearly in the life of Saint Peter whom we hear about in today's gospel.

Peter has a wicked and sinful past. He was frequently misunderstanding Jesus and messing stuff. Just a couple weeks ago on Good Friday, we heard Peter deny Jesus 3 times. But despite this sinful past, Peter keeps trying to be a saint. Today we here Jesus ask Peter 3 times, “do you love me?” In contrast to his 3-fold denial on Good Friday, Peter affirms three times that he does love Jesus.

But even at this point Peter is not perfect. In the English language we only have one word for “love” while in Greek (the language of New Testament) there are many words for different types of love. In today's gospel, Jesus asks Peter if he loves him by using the word “Agape”. The highest form of love while Peter responds by using the word “philio”, a lesser form of love. Another possible translation of today's gospel could be something like this: “Peter, do you love me enough to give your life for me? Yes Jesus, you are a cool guy, I am fond of you.” So Peter affirms his love for Jesus 3 times, but he still falls short of the greater love, the agape love, that Jesus is calling him to.

Again, even despite his imperfections, Peter keeps striving for sainthood. Eventually, Peter does reach this more perfect love as he gave his life in teaching and healing and eventually to giving his life being crucified upside down for the sake of the gospel.

Peter had a sinful past, but became a saint in the future. Indeed every saint has a past while every sinner has a future. So what are we going to do with that future?