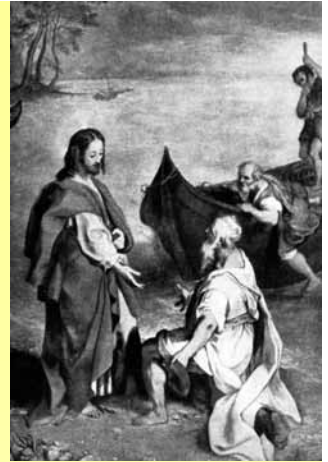


After the Heart of Jesus ...

“Simon, son of John, do you love me?
 ... Simon, son of John, do you love me?
 ... Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

In today’s Gospel passage, Jesus asks Simon Peter three times about his love. By the third time Jesus asks, Peter is distressed and says, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” In one way the triple question concerning his love for Christ reminded Peter of his triple denial of Jesus on Good Friday. Yet the major point of this encounter is Peter’s present willingness to faithfully follow Jesus. After Peter’s expression of his conversion, Jesus places him in charge of his flock: “Feed my lambs ... Tend my sheep ... Feed my sheep.”



Love for Christ should be at the center of our compassion and concern for others. There may be many reasons why we might help others, provide for the needs of the poor, or assist those who suffer. We may do things for a tax write-off, or so that others will notice us, or because we have an excess of material things that we need to downsize from, or because it makes us feel good inside. For the true disciple, though, the reason we can feed the lambs and tend the sheep is because we have a profound love for Christ.

In reality we often act with mixed-motives, and the reasons for our love and concern are not always pure. Reflecting this week on the three-fold question of Jesus, “Do you love me?” can help us purify our intentions as we remember the ways we at times have denied or turned away from Him. More importantly, if we can honestly say in the end with Peter, “Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you,” then we will live the true Easter faith that tends the sheep and feeds the lambs.

This past Lent we were given the opportunity to support a variety of charitable causes with our almsgiving. Here is a short report of our efforts: \$780 in fast food certificates for PADS; 1 van load of food and \$200 for Bloomingdale Food Pantry; 3 car loads of food and \$70 for the Humanitarian Service Project; \$2050 to St. Vincent DePaul Society; \$653 and gift cards for the Biloxi Family Fund. In addition this week we are having our semi-annual collection of clothes and household items for the St. Vincent DePaul Society. Thank you for all your efforts to provide for those in need!

The Knights of Columbus are hosting a pancake breakfast this Sunday in the McDonald Center to benefit the parish and school. Please take some time on Sunday to enjoy a fine breakfast with your parish family. Thank you to the Knights for sponsoring this event for our parish.

This week is commitment Sunday for the 2007 Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal. You should have received a letter from Bishop Sartain and me asking for your support of the many outreach efforts the diocese makes to strengthen the mission of Christ in the seven counties of our diocese. For thirteen years I served as diocesan vocation director and saw the benefit of the

people’s contributions go to training our future priests as well as seeing the vibrancy of Catholic education as I visited parish schools and Catholic high schools. I’ve seen the work of the diocese in raising up the poor, especially children, through our mission trips to Sucre, Bolivia. This past year the diocese has helped us in refocusing our parish council in meeting the priorities here at St. Walter Church. The Diocese serves as our partners in faith, helping us to do what we could not do on our own as individual believers or even as a parish.

Our goal for this year’s Ministries Appeal is \$117,154. This goal is based on our Sunday offertory collection. St. Walter Parish has a strong tradition of going over goal, and I pray that this kind of generous and sacrificial support will continue into the future. Please make a pledge or gift reflecting a desire to support the important work of the diocesan Church. Together in our love for the Lord, may we give

After the Heart of Jesus!
Father John