



6 May 2026  
“Feed My sheep!”

During the rich period between the Lord’s Resurrection, His Ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, let us turn our attention more fully to the theme of the Church. Surely the Lord prepared His disciples even more intensely for what was to come, initiated them into His plans as far as they were able to grasp them, and set the necessary course. One of these essential steps is illustrated by the following text.

*“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ A second time he said to him, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to 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 grieved because he said to him the 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. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.’ This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God. And after this he said to him, ‘Follow me.’” (John 21:15–19)*

Through these words of Scripture, we understand that the risen Lord gave Peter—who had denied Him—an opportunity to renew his testimony of love. Peter loved the Lord; he left everything and followed Him. He even wanted to lay down his life for Him (John 13:37)—and yet he denied Him, just as the Lord had foretold (Luke 22:55–62). The fear of death was still too strong for him at that moment. He had not yet been strengthened by the descent of the Holy Spirit to the point where he could overcome this severe temptation.

As we see, the Lord deals very lovingly with Peter. There is no accusation in His words, but Jesus wants to hear three times from His disciple that Peter loves Him. In the darkness of fear following Jesus’ arrest, Peter had indeed denied Him three times.

The Lord’s first question is: *“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”*

Jesus is asking Peter whether he loves Him more than the others. This shows what the Lord desires from those whom He calls into such a ministry, as it has appeared throughout the history of the Church. His love must be strong, for he is to become the shepherd of the Church, the shepherd of the Body of Christ. Peter and his successors are to speak and act in the name of Jesus, and they will be endowed with great authority for their ministry.

The key to being able to fulfill this commission is love for the Lord. It must be the driving force behind carrying out the shepherd's ministry to the lambs and sheep. Everything else follows. Jesus does not ask: Can you do this in your own strength? Are you wise enough? Do you possess all human virtues? No, He asks: Do you love Me?

Peter is one who has been called. He did not choose this task for himself, but the Lord's word applies: "*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.*" (John 15:16)

After Jesus wanted Peter to confess his love, He entrusted him with the wonderful commission: "*Tend my sheep!*"

It is a shepherd's ministry, and Peter learns more and more what this means. Jesus Himself is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) and the model for all whom He has called into such a ministry. God Himself is the Shepherd of humanity, who lays down His life for the sheep. Thus it becomes clear what the most important prerequisites are for such a ministry in the Kingdom of God, so that it may be carried out in the Spirit of the Lord: a great love for God and for the people entrusted to him.

*"Tend my sheep!"*

The ministry of Peter, whom we recognize as the first Pope, consists primarily in the spiritual care of the flock entrusted to him. This flock is to be nourished with the Word of the Lord, which must be passed on unadulterated as true food. This lies under his supervision, for heresies soon arose that the Apostles had to reject. True doctrine is indispensable so that the emerging Body of the Lord—His Church—is not poisoned. The clear rejection of heresies is therefore essential and is an urgent

part of the office of Peter. If this is neglected, it has a devastating effect on the faithful in the long run. The light of the Holy Spirit is dimmed, and the mind's ability to receive supernatural truth and be enlightened by it is weakened.

The Church has taken this very seriously throughout the centuries. A few days ago, we celebrated St. Athanasius, who fought with his whole life against the spread of the heresy of Arianism. Thank God his efforts were not in vain, and the heresy was banished!

We'll continue with this topic tomorrow.

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**Reflection on today's reading:** <https://en.elijamission.net/clarity-in-doctrine-clarity-in-the-way/>

**Reflection on today's Gospel:** <https://en.elijamission.net/bearing-abundant-fruit-2/>