

## Homily for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter (by Fr. Tommy Lane)

When we see a job advertised we are asked to submit a résumé. We try to submit an impressive résumé because we know that some of those who submit impressive résumés will be called for an interview. And if we're called for the interview we try to impress during the interview.

What kind of résumé would you need to have in order to be asked to be the first Pope? What type of questions would you be asked during the interview? Peter was interviewed by Jesus in the Gospel excerpt we heard today (John 21:1-19), and was asked three questions, "Do you love me?" His résumé wasn't good; he had denied Jesus three times by a charcoal fire on Holy Thursday night. And Peter did not find it easy to accept himself after that – when the cock crew later that evening, Peter wept. He realized his failure. He couldn't cope with it, could not accept it and he wept. He hit rock bottom.

You would not expect Jesus to even consider him for the position of looking after the flock. But Jesus could see his heart and knew he was the man for the job. Why? Because Peter was different to Judas. Peter grew through his mistake, whereas Judas allowed his mistake to conquer him. Peter reformed himself after his mistake, but Judas was not man enough to reform himself. Peter knew what it was to be human, so too did Judas. But, whereas Peter moved on from his sinfulness, Judas did not.

Three times Peter had denied Jesus by a charcoal fire on Holy Thursday evening. But now three times by a different charcoal fire on this Easter day Jesus asks Peter to look after the sheep. Jesus forgave Peter and had confidence in him to make him Pope.

Despite our sinfulness Jesus forgives us and has confidence in us. Jesus does not lock us in by mistakes of the past or the present. We are given room to outgrow the mistakes of the past. Paul wrote, “for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here.” (1 Cor 5:17).

There are some beautiful words in our Psalm today (Ps 30): I will praise you Lord, you have rescued me and have not let my enemies rejoice over me. O Lord, you have raised my soul from the dead, restored me to life from those who sink into the grave The Lord listened and had pity. The Lord came to my help.”

What happened to Peter can happen to us also if we have the faith to accept God’s love and forgiveness. Jesus forgives us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and loves us after we have denied him, after we have disbelieved, after we have given up, after we have sinned. It takes an act of faith to believe in God, and it takes an act of faith to believe that God forgives us and loves us after we repent of our sin.

Sometimes faith is the courage to accept God's love, the courage to accept God's forgiveness and acceptance of ourselves. Peter recovered his faith after his despair; he was able to say "Yes Lord, you know that I love you." We do not allow the past to overcome us like Judas. Instead Peter is our model for repentance and reforming ourselves and allowing the Lord to put us to work for him again. I will conclude with some additional words from the beautiful Psalm today (Ps 30): "I will praise you Lord, you have rescued me and have not let my enemies rejoice over me. O Lord, you have raised my soul from the dead, restored me to life from those who sink into the grave The Lord listened and had pity. The Lord came to my help." God bless you.