

## Friday 28 May

Today is Friday the 29 May in the 7th week of Easter

The Choir of Westminster Cathedral sing Tu Es Petrus by Palestrina: 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

Today's reading is from the Gospel of John.

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.' Jesus 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.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt 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. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.' John 21:15-19

Before the death of Jesus Peter claimed that he would lay down his life for Jesus, only to deny him three times. He trusted in his own enthusiasm and failed. Now, having experienced his own weakness, he is able to assure Jesus three times of his love. Like himself, Jesus invites him to become a good shepherd who cares for his people and lays down his life for them.

"Do you love me?" The question of Jesus is directed to each of us. But before Jesus puts the question to us, he goes to great lengths to assure us that he really loves us. He died making the point. Assured of that first love, we might be less hesitant in declaring our own. Jesus' question comes from one who is more interested in our future prospects than our past failures. He doesn't dwell on the past. He's more interested in what can become of us.

Perhaps, like Peter, we have often said, 'Lord you know I love you'. It's a humble prayer because often we may feel we don't live up to our call from God or to the goodness of love we receive in life. Like Peter, we may feel the shame he felt as he remembered denying his friend, Jesus. The Lord looks into our heart and sees what we would like to be, as well as seeing what we have done in life. The Lord looks into our hearts and loves us for who we are. As I listen to the reading again, how do I respond to Jesus' question, "Do you love me?"

Given my current circumstances, what do I want to say to Jesus today? Guided by St Ignatius, I might ask, 'What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What will I do?' Speak to the Lord who waits lovingly for your reply.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.