

3rd Sunday of Easter – May 4&5, 2019 – Reflection

Here I hang.

Rome is upside down.

The whole world is upside down, yet, I have never seen more clearly.

It was so long ago now, but it still seems like yesterday ... I promised that even if the rest would desert Him, I would be willing to die for Him.

He said that night I would deny Him not once but three times.

I have regretted that night all these years.

I remember those heady days after His Resurrection ... so much joy ... so much relief ... but I still couldn't look at Him, couldn't meet His eyes.

I remember the day we were all on the beach: eating; talking; listening; trying to get our heads around what had happened.

Some of the men started to argue about something or other.

He caught my eye and as He began to walk down the beach, I knew He wanted me to follow.

As we walked, He looked at me ... "Simon, son of John do you love me more than these?"

How could I look at Him after what I'd done? What a coward I was!

"Oh, Lord, you know that I love you."

"Then feed my lambs."

Feed?!! What food did I have?

On we walked. He looked at me.

"Simon, son of John do you love me more than these?"

Three times I said I didn't know Him. I swore up and down that I'd never laid eyes on Him and He asks me now if I love Him. What do I know of love?

"Oh, Lord, you know that I love you."

"Then feed my sheep."

They'd choke on what I have to give them - it's bitter - failure - backstab.

On we walked. I could feel the tears smarting in my eyes. Finally He stopped, took my face in His hands, forced me to look at Him. He peered deep, so deep into my soul.

"Simon, son of John do you love me more than these?"

I felt burned and bright, shame and hope all at once.

I cried like I did that night in Jerusalem, but I found my voice, I found my heart.

"Oh Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you."

"Feed my lambs.'

I can still see His face.

I can still hear His voice.

And, for these thirty years since, Lord knows, I've tried: tried to make up for that night; tried to feed the people; tried to heal sinners just like me; tried to stand with Him and not run away.

Here I hang.

The pain is bad, but, at last, the worst pain is gone.

I promised even if the rest left, I would never. I would die for you.

Today I will - gladly.

Lord, into your hands I commend my spirit.

You are Peter and upon this rock I build my Church.

I no longer call you servant, I call you friend.

My friend, come home ... let us walk again in the cool of the evening.

It is finished.

Amen.