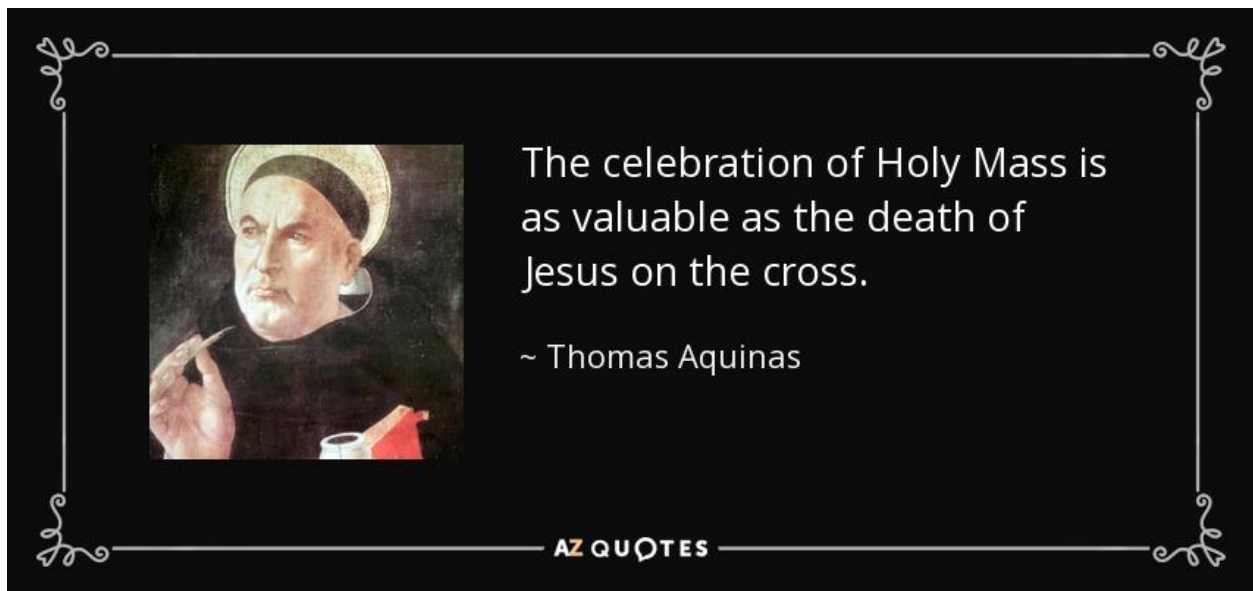


FROM FATHER JOHN: *“Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.” ~ Psalm 103*



At the end of the Gospel of John (chapter 21, verses 15 – 19), our Lord Jesus asks Simon Peter “do you love me” three times. It’s an important question because it applies to us as well and because it teaches us how to love one another.

“After Jesus had revealed himself to his disciples and eaten breakfast with hem, he said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ He then said to Simon Peter a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Simon Peter answered 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 distressed that he had said to him a 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. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and

lead you where you do not want to go.' He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, 'Follow me.'"

This scripture passage was written in Greek and in the Greek language there are several different words for love. Each of these different words depict a different type of love. There is a word for love that points to friendship. This is the type of love that exists between two good friends. There is a word for love that points to romantic love. This is the type of love that exists between a husband and a wife. There is a word for loving one's own self.

Then there is the word for love that our Lord Jesus uses, **agape**. This is the highest form of love. It is the love that originates in God's love for humankind. It is unconditional, totally giving, eternal, never ending, and self-sacrificing. It is not an emotional, feeling type of love. It goes way beyond that to mean the type of love that seeks after the good of others even if it means making great sacrifices in our own lives. For our Lord Jesus, it meant sacrificing His very life on the cross.

What our Lord Jesus is really asking St. Peter, and asking all of us, is do you love me as much as I have loved you, to the death on a cross. Peter begins by answering with the word for love that means friendship but doesn't mean **agape**. Our Lord Jesus is calling all of us to this **agape**-type of love. He's calling us to love Him and others in a way that is unconditional, totally giving, eternal, never ending, and self-sacrificing; in a way that always seeks after the best interest of others rather than our own interest, our own good.

But how do we do it? How do we love this way? Our Lord Jesus gives us a simple answer. He says to us three times, "*Feed my lambs ... Tend my sheep ... Feed my sheep.*" He's telling us to take action, to do something good for another no matter the sacrifice. He's telling us very simply that to love in this way means feeding someone, tending to someone, caring for someone, healing someone, forgiving someone, etc. Our Lord Jesus is calling us to sacrifice our own interests and take some action for the good of another. When we do this, we are responding to the call of our Lord Jesus and loving in the way that He has loved us.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.



**"THE EARTH COULD EXIST MORE EASILY
WITHOUT THE SUN THAN WITHOUT THE HOLY
SACRIFICE OF THE MASS."**

-- St. Padre Pio