



“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.” (John 21. 15 – 17)

Reflecting on this Theological Theme: “Do you love me?”, I feel overwhelmed with God’s love. This mutual love which nourishes our relationship. “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. (1 John 4. 16b) This month of October with its wonderful fall weather has been a reflection of the Creator’s love for me. Cycling from Hamilton to Milton, especially in the morning, is truly inspirational. Travelling east along Britannia with Mount Nemo to the south, crossing my favourite brook, climbing an ascent and the big orange ball ahead in the distance ready to burst into radiant light. Our Creator God has made all this for me. My response is love, “Thanks be to God!”

In the news: a couple of celebrity deaths. We lost Tom Petty and Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip. During their lives, they shared their poetry and music with so many fans. I never knew them but I really enjoyed their songs like Free Falling, Refugee, The Waiting, Ahead by a Century, New Orleans is Sinking and Bobcaygeon. Art inspires and all is gift from Our Father. When I listen to their music, my soul is lifted. I thank these two individuals (and their bands) and God who made them. My heart is filled with love and I thank God for rockin’ music!

Love is all around and therefore God exists. My spouse, my children, my students, my colleagues, my fellow parishioners: so much love. “Yes, Lord, I love you.” I love my wife, my sons, the young people and teachers and administrators and secretaries and custodians and parents of Bishop Reding School. Thank you Lord for all of these beautiful people in my life.

For the Eucharist and Reconciliation: Sacraments of love. For prayer and meditation: God-time. I encounter you in a special way. Thank you for your Saving Act, your gift of love for me. Thank you for the quiet time in the chapel, just you and me. Your True Presence in the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle. “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” You call me to be the best that I can be. I pray that I may grow in holiness and Christian virtue. I pray that I can be a good husband, a good father, a good chaplain. Thank you for your love. “Yes, Lord, I love you.”

Am I perfect? No. Am I always in love with God? No. Am I always in love with people? No. Yet, I know I am a beloved sinner. I fall, I fall again and I trip up a third time. There is always a hand when I’m on the ground: the Lord’s, a friend’s, a stranger’s. Get up and let’s walk together. Let’s carry on. I forgive you. Thank you for your love Lord. Thank you for your love Lord for this weak man. “Do you love me?” “Yes, Lord, I do.”

Those who have gone before us: family members, friends, colleagues. We pray for them. We still love them. They still love us. I feel this love very strongly from my mother. "Blessed are those who have died in the Lord; let them rest from their labours for their good deeds go with them. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen." "Yes, Lord, I love you."

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