

Monsignor Dennis Sheehan
Homily Given on April 18, 2010
Third Sunday of Easter – Liturgical Year C

When the chips were down, Peter really fell apart. Remember Peter there in the high priest's courtyard. "You are one of his disciples," the servant girl insisted. "I don't even know the man," Peter repeated – not once, but three times. Peter made a real mess.

Three days later, the story took a huge turn. There had been the cross. But then – to everyone's surprise - there was the empty tomb. Jesus had won. But Peter? Peter was a loser.

So here he is today, back in Galilee and up to his old trade. He's not having a very good night of work. He couldn't be a disciple, and now he can't even fish.

Suddenly, there is Jesus, right there on the shore. No ghost, no vision. It's really Jesus – at the same time, very different. He helps them fish. He talks. He eats with them. But – and probably most important – he rehabilitates Peter.

Listen to that gentle, insistent exchange. Do you love me? Peter is surprised, even a little flustered. But, with each reply, healing came over him. Three times he gradually shouts: "Yes, Lord. You know I love you." With each answer, Peter's guilt melts away. His friendship with Jesus builds anew.

That's Jesus' way, even now. He's not shouting, pointing, embarrassing. But – he doesn't let us off the hook either. He won't minimize our sins. He won't say our failures make no difference.

Listen to Jesus today, not only with Peter, but with you or me or any of us:

Do you love me enough to be faithful to your word?
Do you love me enough to live by my Gospel?

Finally, notice one important thing. Peter's rehabilitation is Jesus' work. Jesus comes seeking Peter, not the other way around. Peter is just trying to forget. Jesus comes to forgive, restore, make whole. Have you or I met this Jesus? Has he shown up to surprise us, to change us, to rehabilitate us?

This is the Easter promise of the Risen Jesus: I'll show up when you least expect. And don't be surprised if meeting Jesus really makes a change!

Blessed Easter to all.