



St Marylebone  
Parish Church

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

*John 21.15-19*

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Alleluia!*

At the Last Supper, Peter was vehement in his assertion that, even if all the other disciples should deny Jesus or run away from him, he would not.

Of course, very quickly the emptiness of those words was proved when Peter did indeed deny Jesus – not just once, but *three* times in the courtyard of the High Priest's House.

Quite what Peter felt like after committing this act of treachery we can only guess at. But in many ways, the time after Peter's denial must have seemed like a barely-living death.

In this morning's gospel we have the antithesis of Peter's denial and moral and spiritual death.

Three times, mirroring Peter's three-fold denial, and the three days Jesus himself had lain in the tomb, Jesus gently asks his friend if he loves him; three times Peter answers 'yes', 'yes' in

spite of all that has happened, he really does love him.

Slowly, gently, Jesus raises Peter from death and Peter, experiences for himself, first hand, resurrection and new life.

And, in this new resurrection life which he now shares with his master and friend, Jesus, he finds that he has a job to do: Peter is to feed Christ's sheep, to tend them and to nurture them and to protect them.

Every one of us has moments when we deny Jesus, not perhaps as spectacularly or publicly as Peter, but in small, invidious, ways, which we know are no less times of denial than Peter's spectacular denial.

And each of us, needs – every time we sin, like Peter, to hear Jesus' gentle, forgiving, tasking voice as he stoops to embrace and raise us from death into the new life of his Resurrection.

Peter stands for everyone who truly tries to follow Christ; all who not only deny him, but who also know that in spite of their actions, love him and are prepared to know themselves forgiven and are prepared to run the risk living the new life of the Resurrection. Alleluia!