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# Study Questions for the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*

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The Gospel of St. John

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## THE GOSPEL OF SAINT JOHN

### Chapter 1

#### *For understanding*

1. **1:1.** How does John allude to the beginning of Genesis? Since Genesis states that God created the universe through a Word, what is John implying about it? What is the significance of John's saying that the Word "was God"?
2. **Word Study: Word.** With what did Greek philosophers associate the idea of the Word? What two traditions does the Bible associate with the idea of the Word? How does John seem to draw these strands together?
3. **1:14.** What is the connection between the Incarnation of God the Son and the erection, recounted in the Old Testament, of the Tabernacle in the wilderness? What does the expression "grace and truth" mean? How is that meaning linked to the idea of glory?
4. **1:49.** How is Nathanael's response to Jesus (who saw him under the fig tree) elicited by a knowledge of the Old Testament? What makes Nathanael think that he is standing before the Son of God?
5. **1:51.** How does Jesus place himself in the center of Jacob's dream of the ladder with angels ascending and descending? Why is this placement important to John's message?

#### *For application*

1. **1:12–13.** When did you first realize that you had become a child of God at Baptism? What kind of grace did this transformation take? How do you experience that grace in your daily life?
2. **1:18.** How is the Son making the Father known to you? How has your relationship with the Father changed as you have come to know the Son?
3. **1:29.** What does it mean to "behold" the Lamb of God? What are you supposed to see when you look at him? What kind of lamb takes away sin?
4. **1:38–39.** How has your curiosity about Jesus influenced your faith in him? In what circumstances have you heard Jesus' invitation to "come and see" where he lives?

### Chapter 2

#### *For understanding*

1. **2:4.** How does Jesus' use of the word "woman" point to a parallel between Eve and Mary? In what two ways may the Hebrew idiom "what have you to do with me?" be understood? Which meaning best fits this context?
2. **2:10.** What associations might be attached to the steward's expression "the good wine" in this passage?
3. **Word Study: Signs.** Why does John call Jesus' miracles *signs*? What are the seven signs John reports in his Gospel?
4. **2:14–22.** In what two ways might one explain why John places the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, whereas the other Gospels place it near the end?

*For application*

1. **2:5.** How unconditionally do you do whatever Jesus tells you to do? Do you ever try to place limits on what he can tell you to do?
2. **2:15–16.** According to the textual note for this verse, Origen saw Jesus' action as driving out a lack of personal discipline and a herd of earthly attachments. What attachments do you have that Jesus might want to drive out of your heart (his Father's house)?
3. **2:17.** How does the verse from Psalm 69, quoted here, apply to you? How zealous are you for God's house? What forms does this zeal take?
4. **2:23–25.** What is the basis of your relationship with Jesus? How strong do you think it is? How reliable do you think he might find you?

**Chapter 3***For understanding*

1. **3:5.** What observations suggest that "water and the Spirit" refers to the Sacrament of Baptism? How did the Old Testament envision the link between water and the Spirit?
2. **3:14.** How does Jesus' reference to the bronze serpent in Numbers 21 refer to his own Crucifixion? What does the expression "be lifted up" mean?
3. **3:16.** What is the function of this verse in the text? How should the expression "eternal life" be understood in John? When does eternal life begin?
4. **3:36.** How is faith to be exercised? What is the connection between belief and obedience? If the opposite of faith is not merely unbelief, what is it?

*For application*

1. **3:8.** What experience in your own life shows a spontaneous action of the Holy Spirit that you did not recognize at the time (but did so later)? What caused you to think that it was the Spirit at work?
2. **3:11.** How have you testified to what you have seen of God's work? What forms has this testimony taken? How much of this testimony has been in words rather than in an overall way of life?
3. **3:30.** How does Jesus "increase" in your life? How do John's imperatives ("must increase . . . must decrease") apply to you?
4. **3:36.** What is the importance of obedience in this passage? What is your attitude to obedience when it comes to faith?

**Chapter 4***For understanding*

1. **4:10.** What two levels of meaning does the expression "living water" have? Look up Is 12:3, Ezek 47:1–12, and Zech 14:8. How do those passages use the idea of living water?
2. **4:18.** How does the woman's life with "five husbands" parallel the historical experience of the Samaritan people (see 2 Kings 17:24–31)? What does the name *Baal* mean?
3. **4:23.** What does the expression "in spirit and truth" mean?
4. **Topical Essay: The "Hour" of Jesus.** What function does the frequent mention of

Jesus' "hour" have in John's Gospel? What are the two dimensions of this hour? Why are these two dimensions inseparable?

*For application*

1. **4:16–19.** Has the Spirit ever revealed something to you about yourself that you would just as soon have avoided knowing? What did you do about that revelation?
2. **4:28.** According to the note for this passage, what is the significance of the woman leaving her water jar by the well? As you discover the truth about Jesus, what does he want you to leave behind?
3. **4:34.** How can you regard doing God's will in your life as *food*? How are you nourished by doing his will?
4. **4:48–50.** How much does your faith rely on some kind of sign that God will do what he promises? Or how does it resemble that of the official who took Jesus at his word?

## Chapter 5

*For understanding*

1. **5:5.** What about Israelite history might the 38-year duration of the man's illness recall?
2. **5:29.** When Christ claims the authority to raise both the righteous and the wicked from the dead, what two oracles from the Old Testament stand in the background of his claim? How does Jesus view himself in the light of these prophetic narratives?
3. **5:30–47.** Who or what are the witnesses Jesus calls on to verify the divine authority and mission given him from God? How many witnesses did Jewish legal tradition require to substantiate testimony?
4. **5:46.** What three passages from the Pentateuch substantiate Jesus' claim that Moses wrote of him?

*For application*

1. **5:6–9.** How does the paralyzed man answer Jesus' question about wanting to be well? When you pray, do you tend to ask for God's help confidently, or do you complain about your situation?
2. **5:14.** Jesus warns the man who has been cured not to sin any more now that he has been healed. What worse things might happen to the man if he sins now that he is well? What shape does your relationship with God take when you get sick? How does it change as you recover?
3. **5:30.** Jesus is the divine Son of the Father, yet whose will does he want to do? What happens when you try to do things your own way? How might you seek to imitate Jesus' attitude in your home or work life?
4. **5:39–40.** Jesus accuses his hearers of searching the Bible for eternal life but failing to see the witness Scripture gives to Jesus himself, who is the source of life. How often do you cling to prejudices and personal interpretations that make it difficult to hear what God is truly saying?

## Chapter 6

### *For understanding*

1. **6:4.** What happens during a Passover (seder) meal? Why does the evangelist mention the upcoming Passover feast?
2. **6:35–59.** What are two ways in which the Bread of Life discourse has been interpreted? How might the discourse be divided into two distinct parts? How do the two halves work together?
3. **6:53.** How do we know from this passage that Jesus is speaking literally and sacramentally, rather than metaphorically? Since the Old Testament forbids the drinking of blood, why does Jesus' injunction to drink his blood not fall under its prohibitions?
4. **Word Study: Eats (6:54).** What does *trōgō* actually mean in English? How does ancient Greek literature use the verb? Why does Jesus use such a graphic word instead of the normal vocabulary?

### *For application*

1. **6:15–21.** What tends to happen in your life when you get impatient waiting for God to act and so start to take action yourself? What tends to happen when his help arrives (even if it appears to come late)?
2. **6:28–29.** What do you think Jesus means by saying that believing in him is doing God's work? Does believing mean assenting mentally to a theological position, or might it refer to something more active? If the latter, what?
3. **6:53–54.** How often do you go to Communion? What is your experience of God's life when you do? According to Jesus' promise in this passage, when does eternal life begin if you eat his flesh?
4. **6:60–65.** What are some of Jesus' "hard sayings" in the Gospels about living with God? How do they apply to you? Have you ever tried to get God to change his mind? What was the result?

## Chapter 7

### *For understanding*

1. **7:2.** What does the feast of Tabernacles (Booths) commemorate? What two liturgical ceremonies from this feast hang as a backdrop to Jesus' teaching in Jn 7–8?
2. **7:8.** When Jesus says that he is "not going up" to Jerusalem, what two levels of meaning does his expression have?
3. **7:27.** What two traditions regarding the birth and origin of the Messiah were in circulation in ancient Judaism? What irony is attached to these traditions?
4. **7:38.** What three Old Testament passages are summarized in John's statement that "out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water"? How do they point forward to Jesus?

### *For application*

1. **7:16–18.** How careful are you to use discernment in the materials you read about Catholicism or in what you hear taught from the pulpit or in the classroom? If you have questions, what do you do about getting answers? If you teach others about the faith, how careful are you to ensure that you are teaching it accurately?

2. **7:24.** What does Jesus mean by judging here? How does he want you to judge? What should you be judging?
3. **7:37–39.** How do you recognize a thirst for Jesus in yourself? What do you do about it? How does Jesus want you to come to him to drink?
4. **7:40–52.** Most people have an opinion about who Jesus is and where he comes from. What is your own opinion at the moment? How has it changed over the years? How do you find out who Jesus really is?

## Chapter 8

### *For understanding*

1. **8:12.** What is the significance of the location where Jesus is standing as he calls himself the “light of the world”? What are three Old Testament themes that prepare the way for Jesus as the only “true light”?
2. **8:24.** Of what does Jesus stress the importance in the context of saying “I am he”? What Old Testament passage does this evoke?
3. **8:35.** In saying that the slave has no permanent residence in the household but that the son does, to what Old Testament story does Jesus allude? How does Jesus apply this narrative to the sons of Abraham of his own day?
4. **8:56.** When Jesus says that Abraham “rejoiced that he was to see my day”, to what narrative in Genesis might this statement refer? In what ways?

### *For application*

1. **8:11.** Though Jesus does not condemn the woman taken in adultery, what attitude does he take toward her sin? Compare this passage with Jn 5:14. What attitude should you take toward sin of any kind?
2. **8:31ff.** Why does Jesus seem deliberately to aggravate those who believe in him? On what are they relying? On what is he asking them to rely?
3. **8:31–32, 43–47.** Why is hearing the word of God difficult for people to bear? How easy is it for you to fool yourself (or be fooled) about yourself—and how hard is it for you to face the truth? When you face the truth, how does your relationship with God change?
4. **8:34–35.** How might you verify from experience that anyone who commits sin is a slave to it? If you continue to sin, how secure do you think your place is in God’s household?

## Chapter 9

### *For understanding*

1. **9:2.** What have some people reading Scripture thought about the connection between sickness and sin? Whose sin? What does Jesus say about that connection?
2. **9:7.** What Old Testament episode does Jesus’ command to the man born blind (“go, wash”) recall? What is the pool of Siloam? Why does John make an editorial comment on the meaning of the name “Siloam”? Finally, how does this episode prepare for Baptism?
3. **9:11.** How does the perception of Jesus deepen as the story unfolds?

4. **9:39.** To whom does Jesus reveal or withhold revelation of the Father and his will? To what are the Pharisees blind?

*For application*

1. **9:19–23.** What are the blind man's parents afraid of? How do they deal with their fear? How have you responded when asked tough questions about your faith?
2. **9:24–34.** How does the blind man's character contrast with that of his parents? How willing are you to stand up for the facts against those who oppose you?
3. **9:35–37.** How does Jesus meet up with the blind man again? What does he ask of him? What does Jesus ask of you when you say that you "see" him?
4. **9:41.** How would you translate Jesus' remark in terms of your own life? Why would sin remain for those who claim to "see" but are blind? What is the sin that remains?

## Chapter 10

*For understanding*

1. **10:11.** Although Yahweh was the divine Shepherd of Israel in the Old Testament, how did he exercise his rule? How will he exercise it in the last days?
2. **10:16.** To whom does the phrase "other sheep" refer? If there is one flock and one shepherd, where does the authority of Peter and the apostles come from? The Apostles' Creed enumerates the four marks of the Church; what does it mean by the mark of oneness?
3. **10:22.** What is the feast of Hanukkah, and what does it commemorate?
4. **10:35.** When Jesus says that "Scripture cannot be nullified", what are three implications of his statement?

*For application*

1. **10:7–9.** How many gates does the sheepfold have that Jesus is describing? Who (not what) is that gate? Who is the only gatekeeper? What does all of this say about all other religious positions that do not acknowledge Jesus' role?
2. **10:10.** Why has Jesus come to you? What does that mean for you?
3. **10:17–18.** Even though the authorities will arrest, try, and execute Jesus, who has ultimate control over his destiny? What kind of assurance can you derive from this?
4. **10:28.** If no one can take Jesus' sheep out of his hand, what power does the world or the devil have over you? How, then, can a sheep of his be lost?

## Chapter 11

*For understanding*

1. **11:17.** Why is the fact that Lazarus has been dead for four days decisive in this story? How did Jews in New Testament times prepare the dead for burial? From an allegorical perspective, what are the four stages of spiritual death?
2. **11:24.** Where in the Old Testament is a belief in the resurrection supported? What do some of the passages cited in the note say about it?
3. **11:33.** What is a more literal translation of the word rendered "troubled" in this passage? What may have prompted Jesus' emotional reaction?
4. **11:48.** What is so ironic about the Sanhedrin's fear that the Romans would come?

Why did they come?

*For application*

1. **11:5–6.** Having been told that Jesus loved Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, what do you make of the verse that begins, “So when he heard . . .”? How is his deliberate delay a sign of love? When Jesus delays answering your requests to come speedily, how do you interpret the delay?
2. **11:24–26.** What does Jesus mean by identifying resurrection and life with himself? When you think of your own death, what do you really believe about your resurrection? In that light, how do you regard your death?
3. **11:35.** Refer to the note for this verse. What are some of the other emotions that Jesus displays in the Gospels? How might an understanding of these reactions, and the events that prompted them, affect your faith in him?
4. **11:41–42a.** How does Jesus’ prayer begin? How do your prayers begin? Faced with a difficult situation, how ready are you to acknowledge that God always hears you?

## Chapter 12

*For understanding*

1. **12:8.** In the context of Deut 15:11, what point is Jesus making by saying that “the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me”?
2. **12:15.** How does Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem reflect the royal procession of the Messiah foretold by Zechariah? What was the point of riding on a donkey?
3. **12:32.** How does the expression “when I am lifted up” recall the fourth Servant Song from Isaiah? How does Jesus see himself as an embodiment of Isaiah’s “ensign” posted for the gathering of the nations?
4. **12:40.** How do Isaiah’s and Jesus’ missions parallel each other?
5. **12:41.** How might the similar wording of Is 6:10 (alluded to in the preceding verse) and the Suffering Servant passage in Is 52:13 yield a new insight into the meaning of John’s observation that Isaiah “saw his glory”?

*For application*

1. **12:3–5.** What does Judas’ question imply about Mary’s generosity? When have you criticized (or been criticized by) someone for being generous? What was the outcome of the criticism?
2. **12:24.** How has this principle of the spiritual life manifested itself in your life? How have you “died”? What was the fruit that resulted?
3. **12:27–28.** What is your response to intense personal suffering? How like Jesus’ attitude is your own?
4. **12:42–43.** Have you ever been more concerned about the good opinion of others than about pleasing God? How does your desire for the respect of others influence the way you live your Catholic life?

## Chapter 13

*For understanding*

1. **Topical Essay: When Did Jesus Celebrate the Last Supper?** From the

archaeological, chronological, and traditional points of view, how does placing the Last Supper on Tuesday of Holy Week seem to give us a more coherent picture of Jesus' last days?

2. **13:4.** When Jesus lays aside his garments, what might this symbolize? How does the language of the verse make this clear?
3. **13:18.** Why does Jesus allude to Ps 41:9? How does the psalm end?
4. **13:34.** How does Jesus' new commandment of love go beyond that of the Old Covenant? Where does this love come from?

*For application*

1. **13:8.** Why would refusing to let Jesus minister to you mean that you had no part in him? How can you let him minister to you in your daily life?
2. **13:15–17.** If Jesus' words and actions are an example for you, why is it so hard to follow that example? In the context of Jesus' audience, what is the significance of the reference to servants and messengers? How do these words describe you?
3. **13:34–35.** How, according to Jesus, is his new commandment to be carried out? Would all know you are his disciple by the way *you* behave? Why or why not?
4. **13:37–38.** How committed to Jesus are you, really? How are you reminded of your weakness in that commitment?

## Chapter 14

*For understanding*

1. **14:6.** What is Jesus claiming by calling himself “the way”? How many paths to heaven, then, are there?
2. **Word Study: Counselor.** In legal terms, what is a Paraclete? In what way is Jesus a Paraclete? How is the Holy Spirit a Paraclete?
3. **14:26.** Why is the third Person of the Trinity sent from heaven? What is Jesus promising by sending the Holy Spirit? What is he *not* promising?
4. **14:28.** When Jesus says that the Father is greater than he, what does he mean? If no one of the Divine Persons exceeds the others in greatness, how might you characterize the relation among them?

*For application*

1. **14:6.** What does Jesus' claim to be the “way, and the truth, and the life” mean for you personally? In what respects is Jesus the way for you? How is he the truth? How is he your life?
2. **14:15–17.** What does Jesus say is an indication of your love for him? According to the passage, how can you know that the Holy Spirit “dwells with you, and will be in you”?
3. **14:21–24.** In the context of all of these verses, what answer is Jesus giving to Judas' question? Why would Jesus manifest himself to the disciples but not to the world?
4. **14:25–27.** Is the peace Jesus offers a feeling or a relationship? In context, how is Jesus' peace different from that of the world? What is the relationship between peace and being troubled or afraid?

## Chapter 15

### *For understanding*

1. **15:1–11.** What does the metaphor of the vine assume, and who are the persons involved? When Jesus uses this Old Testament imagery, what is he stressing?
2. **15:6.** What fate awaits every branch that withers away from Christ? What other New Testament passages allude to this fate? How did Ezekiel use the same idea?
3. **15:14.** Why is the promise of intimacy with Jesus conditional? Who was the first person in the Bible to be called a “friend” of God?
4. **15:26.** What is the relationship of the Father and the Son in the sending of the Spirit? How does this passage support the wording in the Nicene Creed that the Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son”?

### *For application*

1. **15:1–8.** What kind of “fruit” does the Father (the vinedresser) expect you to bear? When Jesus asserts that you can do nothing without him, what do you think he means? How literally do you think he means it?
2. **15:13.** How does Jesus lay down his life for his friends? How does he want you to lay down yours? What does he say is the measure of our love for one another (v. 12)?
3. **15:16.** Who does Jesus say initiates your relationship with him? What was the purpose of his choice?
4. **15:18–20.** Assuming the term “world” in this passage is not the physical creation, what is it? As a friend of Jesus, what can you expect from this “world”? Why?

## Chapter 16

### *For understanding*

1. **16:7.** How will it be to the disciples’ advantage that Jesus go away from them? What benefits will the Spirit bring?
2. **16:8.** How does the Spirit “convince” the world of sin? In what juridical role does the Spirit act in this case?
3. **16:13.** In what way is the guiding mission of the Holy Spirit directly opposed to the work of Satan? How does this passage relate to the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on infallibility?
4. **16:25.** To what is Jesus referring when he says he has been speaking in figures?

### *For application*

1. **16:1–4a.** What strength does Jesus expect you to derive from his warning of future persecution? To which of the four cardinal virtues does his warning direct the mind (and therefore the will)?
2. **16:7–11.** What is the role of the Holy Spirit in your personal life?
3. **16:20–22.** Given the fact of Jesus’ Resurrection, what is the joy that should be yours in your life with him? Why will no one be able to take that joy away from you?
4. **16:32–33.** What kinds of tribulation or suffering do you experience as coming from the world (not from the devil or yourself)? How does Jesus’ presence encourage you toward peace and good cheer?

## Chapter 17

### *For understanding*

1. **Word Study: Glorify.** What is the biblical perspective on the “glory” of God? What are men doing when they “glorify” God? How is the glory of the eternal Son manifested in John’s Gospel? What is Jesus asking the Father, then, to do?
2. **17:3.** What are the characteristics of our knowledge of God in his glory? According to Jeremiah, of what is personal knowledge of God the sign? On what Old Testament revelation is the New Testament revelation of the Trinity built?
3. **17:17.** For what purpose does Jesus ask the Father to “sanctify” the disciples? What is their task to be? What is the link between this “sanctification” and that of the Old Testament priesthood?
4. **17:23.** What kind of unity does Jesus desire? What is the source and pattern of the Church’s unity?

### *For application*

1. **17:3.** When does knowledge of “the only true God” begin? When, therefore, does eternal life begin?
2. **17:11.** How does the “family unity” that Jesus prayed for manifest itself in your parish? What kinds of groupings exist there? Where do you stand in relation to them? How are you working to see that Jesus’ prayer is realized where you worship?
3. **17:14–17.** How does the saying “You can take the boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the boy” apply to your own relation with the *world*, on the one hand, and the *truth*, on the other? To which of the two do you—in your heart of hearts—belong? How do you know that?
4. **17:20–21.** Why does Jesus want all Christians to be in union with each other? What does our disunity do to the world’s belief in Jesus? How does Jesus indicate that the issue of division should be addressed (see v. 23)?

## Chapter 18

### *For understanding*

1. **18:6.** What is one reason why those who come to arrest Jesus fall to the ground when he says, “I AM”?
2. **18:13.** Who is Annas? Why is he not functioning as high priest? What is his relationship to Caiaphas?
3. **18:15.** Who is the other disciple who follows Jesus with Peter? What tradition preserved by Eusebius would explain how this disciple came to know the high priest, the name of the high priest’s slave, and the family of this slave?
4. **18:31.** What punishments is the Sanhedrin denied the right to administer to condemned criminals? What punishments do the Romans administer and to whom? Why is crucifixion virtually inevitable in Jesus’ case?

### *For application*

1. **18:4–11.** What does this passage suggest about who controls the situation? Why does he control it (v. 11)? How does your faith help you approach difficult or even dangerous situations?

2. **18:25–27.** Have you been in situations where you would have preferred that others not know you are a Christian or a Catholic? How did you deal with them? What did you think of your own conduct?
3. **18:37.** How does Jesus imply that his kingship is exercised? What do you think it means for one who is “of the truth” to “hear my voice”?

## Chapter 19

### *For understanding*

1. **19:23.** What other vestment does the seamless tunic of Jesus recall? What is the implication? What allegorical meaning does St. Cyprian see in the seamless tunic?
2. **19:26.** Why does Jesus address his Mother as “woman”? How does that address allude to Gen 3:15? In what way might John be regarded as an icon of every disciple when Jesus asks Mary to look upon him as her son? What assumption is being made regarding New Covenant family relationships?
3. **19:34.** What is the literal significance of the blood and water from Jesus’ side? How does the episode recall the story of the rock struck by Moses in the desert? How does Paul interpret it? What might the blood and water symbolize with respect to Christian sacraments?

### *For application*

1. **19:2–3.** What kind of suffering might the crown of thorns signify? What kinds of spiritual, mental, or emotional suffering have you endured? How have you handled it as a Christian?
2. **19:7–9.** What is Pilate afraid of? How has superstition or dread of the unknown affected your religious life? Why does Jesus give Pilate no answer to his question?
3. **19:26–27.** How would you characterize your filial relationship with Mary? Spiritually, how have you taken her into your own home?
4. **19:28.** Compare this verse with v. 30. What kind of thirst other than the physical might Jesus have in mind?

## Chapter 20

### *For understanding*

1. **20:7.** How do the linen shroud and the napkin provide corroborating evidence of the Resurrection?
2. **20:20.** What point is Jesus making by showing the wounds in his hands and his side? How do we know that he carries these marks into heaven?
3. **20:23.** When do the apostles carry out Jesus’ mission of reconciling sinners? How is the authority to forgive or retain described elsewhere in the Gospels? According to the Council of Trent, when did Jesus institute the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
4. **20:30–31.** What was John’s purpose in writing his Gospel?

### *For application*

1. **20:13–14.** Recall some occasions in your life when you feared that God was distant from you but proved to be very near. How did you respond when you felt God was distant? How did you come to see his nearness?

2. **20:19.** Have you ever locked the doors of your heart against the outside world (or against family or persons of other faiths) out of fear? What does Jesus' greeting of "Peace" do to allay the fear?
3. **20:24–25.** Do you demand evidence from God before you will believe? Even if you do not demand it explicitly, what is there in your approach to God that might suggest you want him to prove himself?
4. **20:28.** Under what circumstances are you liable to exclaim, "My Lord and my God!" along with Thomas? How might that prayer become more than a mere formula?

## Chapter 21

### *For understanding*

1. **21:9.** What is the significance behind the detail that the fire is a charcoal fire (compare to Jn 18:18)?
2. **21:11.** What might be the symbolism of the number of fish (153) that the disciples haul ashore?
3. **21:15–17.** Why does Peter reaffirm his love for Jesus three times? How might the different Greek verbs used for love in Jesus' question be significant (especially in the light of the single verb for love as friendship that Peter uses)? What does Jesus seem to want Peter to admit?
4. **21:15.** What does Jesus mean by telling Peter to "feed my lambs"? How does this square with Jesus' identity as the "Good Shepherd"? How does the First Vatican Council understand this passage?

### *For application*

1. **21:7.** Why do you think it is Peter (who denied Jesus) who swims ashore rather than John (the disciple whom Jesus loves)? When have you been so eager to be with the Lord that you did something a bit foolish?
2. **21:15–17.** How do you love the Lord? How do you show it? Are you content just to be Jesus' friend, or do you want to go farther to a more sacrificial love?
3. **21:18–19.** Though Jesus' prediction applies specifically to Peter, it has a certain universality as well. How has God's call in your life led you to places, circumstances, or relationships you would rather have avoided? How has that been a "death" to self? How have you used it to glorify God?
4. **21:21–22.** When have you compared your talents, intellect, or spirituality to that of someone else? How has the comparison affected your relationship to that person or to God? What does Jesus tell you in this passage about making such comparisons?