

New Year's Most Important Question

What is the most important question to ask ourselves as we go into the New Year? It is the question that Jesus asked Simon Peter by the Sea of Galilee, "Simon, son of John, do you truly love me?" (*John 21:16*) Jesus says to each one of us, "----- do you truly love me?" We can put our name at the beginning of that question.

Loving Jesus is not serving him – that follows. Some of us are full of plans on January 1st to serve him. Do we love him? Service without love for Jesus can easily become an ego trip or with the best of motives degenerate into joyless activity. Remember the elder brother in the gospel. No one could fault him for his service "Look! All these years I have been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders." (*Luke 15:29*) It was love and compassion he lacked. His father had these in full measure. St Augustine knew regret for lost years. It wasn't lack of serving God that he regretted it was lack of loving him. "Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you!" (*The Confessions of St Augustine*)

There was an old Cliff College chorus that had the words, "Follow, follow I will follow Jesus, anywhere, everywhere I will follow him". Accompanied by a catchy tune it was sung with great enthusiasm! We can only truly sing those words and mean them if we love Jesus, if in our hearts we know that we would die for him.



Our Bethany.

We built Bethany where we Sisters live as a self-build. It took four years and so is a special gift of the heavenly Father. We chose the name, "Bethany" because this was the home not far from Jerusalem in New Testament times where Jesus was loved. We wanted our Bethany to be a home where Jesus was loved. A Sister wrote these lovely words as we moved in.

"Here are companions and welcome,
Here there is oil for your wounds,
Balm for your sadness and sorrows,
A home where your happiness abounds.
We greet you, Jesus, with flowers,
Posies of melody and song.
We sprinkle you with love's perfume,
The fragrance of lives laid down."

The Lord Jesus comes to each of us at the beginning of a new year with this question – "Do you truly love me"?