

## Third Sunday of Easter

May 1, 2022

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Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41; Rev 5:11-14; Jn 21:1-19 or 21:1-14

Good morning! Today's readings are rich descriptions of the experiences of the followers of Jesus in their early days of discipleship. What perspective can they offer to us about our lives as followers of Jesus? How does what happened in their lives, happen in ours as well? How might their experience help us hear the call of faith in our lives? How are we being schooled in this time of the liturgical year and in these days of our lifetime?

Today's readings speak of the work of the spirit in the disciples, the spirit given to them by Jesus. See the bravery that Peter shows: before the Sanhedrin he testifies "We are witnesses of the life and teachings of Jesus and we are called to testify to them." The Spirit also witnesses to the life and teachings of Jesus, the Spirit we too have been given by Jesus. The gospel story of the disciples' nighttime fishing shows Jesus asking Peter three times: do you love me? And Peter responds three times, Yes, you know that I love you—giving Peter the opportunity to make a living amends for his denial of Jesus during the Passion. The work of the Spirit lets Peter speak bravely before the Sanhedrin; the work of the Spirit lets Peter accept the gifts of forgiveness and reconciliation.

In today's gospel story, the disciples have gotten back to their former pursuits. Peter decides to go fishing... and the others go with him. In the morning, unrecognized, Jesus on the beach asks if they've caught anything during the night and they say, No. He suggests that they try dropping the net on the other side of the boat ...and they have such success they cannot pull in their net. Then they recognize him: It is the Lord! Jesus already has a fire going on the beach and has fish on it and bread. He invites them to bring some of the fish they just caught and to join him for breakfast...and then—as at the Last Supper—he took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner, the fish.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus has his interchange with Peter: Do you love me. Yes, Lord, you know I do. Three times. Then, Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Follow me.

Christian tradition accepts John's gospel as the work of his old age, likely written toward the end of the first century in the common era. John shows his familiarity with the Synoptic gospels and the events of Jesus' life described there, relying on them and going beyond. After a lifetime of reflection and teaching in the Christian community, John distills and simplifies the story of Jesus, giving emphasis to the virtue of love: Jesus the Word is the revelation of God's love. Love is the revelation itself, showing humanity how to best live human life.

We, like Peter and the other followers of Jesus, are called to discipleship in the sharing of the bread and of the spirit. The Spirit turns us into disciples. We too hear: Feed my lambs; Tend my sheep. Follow me. And he delivers us from our own insufficiency. Try the other side of the boat.

In our Christian life of Faith, can we recognize the Lord and the work of the Spirit, as we endeavor to understand and grapple with the transformation we are called to? Can we hear this call even in a global pandemic? In the call to care for the earth, our common home? In together finding a new normal? In not contributing to polarization as we seek solutions?

All of this and other of our hearts' concerns we bring to this shared table and give thanks for the sharing of the bread and the holy spirit, and ask for guidance in these days of ours.