Friday in the Octave of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 21:1-14): Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way. Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We also will come with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?" They answered him, "No." So he said to them, "Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something." So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish.

When they climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come, have breakfast." And none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they realized it was the Lord. Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.

"This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead"

Fr. Joaquim MONRÓS i Guitart
(Tarragona, Spain)

Today, for the third time, Jesus reveals Himself to his disciples after His rising. Peter has gone back to his old fisherman job and the others have decided to join him. It stands to reason that, if he was a fisherman

before following Jesus, afterwards, he gets back to his old job; and there still are those who are surprised to see that it is not necessary to leave one's honest work to follow Christ.

That night they caught nothing! And when the day breaks and Jesus appears, they do not recognize Him until He asks them for something to eat. When they tell Him they have nothing, He just points out where they are to throw their net. And, even though fishermen seem to have all the answers and they had fished all the night to no avail, they obey Him. “The power of obedience! The lake of Tiberias had denied its fishes to Peter's nets. A whole night in vain. — Then, obedient, he lowered his net again to the water and they caught 'a huge number of fish'. — Believe me: the miracle is repeated each day.” (Saint Josemaria Escrivá).

The Evangelist points out “the net was dragged ashore full of one hundred fifty-three large fish” (Jn 21:11) but, in spite of being so many, the net was not torn. These are details to bear in mind, as Redemption, amid normal work, takes place with responsible obedience.

They “realized it was the Lord. Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them” (Jn 21:12-13). He did the same with the fish. If we obey Him we shall not lack either the spiritual or the material food. He taught this to His closest followers and Saint John Paul II said it too: “At the beginning of the new millennium, our hearts ring out with the words of Jesus when one day (...) he invited the Apostle to ‘put out into the deep’ for a catch: ‘Duc in altum’ (Lk 5:4). Peter and his first companions trusted Christ's words, and ‘they caught a great number of fish’ (Lk 5:6). Duc in altum! These words ring out for us today”.

With our obedience —like Our Lady Mary's obedience— we ask the Lord to go on giving His Church His apostolic fruits.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “And hence the most blessed Apostles and all the disciples, who had been both bewildered at His death on the cross and backward in believing His Resurrection, were so strengthened by the clearness of the truth that when the Lord entered the heights of heaven, not only were they affected with no sadness, but were even filled with great joy.” (Saint Leo the Great)

- “The Evangelist stresses the fact that ‘no one dared ask him: ‘Who are you?’ – they knew it was the Lord’. And this is important for us: living an intense relationship with Jesus, an intimacy of dialogue and of life, in such a way as to recognize him as ‘the Lord’.” (Francis)

- “Very often in the Gospels people address Jesus as "Lord". This title testifies to the respect and trust of those who approach him for help and healing (...). In the encounter with the risen Jesus, this title becomes adoration: ‘My Lord and my God!’ (Jn 20:28). It thus takes on a connotation of love and affection that remains proper to the Christian tradition: ‘It is the Lord!’ (Jn 21:7).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 448)

Other comments

“Children, have you caught anything to eat?”

Fr. Vicent MARTÍNEZ
(Valencia, Spain)

Today the apostles return to their usual work: fishing. “The narrative is situated in the context of the everyday life of the disciples, who returned to their land and to their work as fishermen, after the shocking days of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. It was difficult for them to understand what had taken place.” (Pope Francis). Perhaps still bewildered, they live with a certain anxiety and darkness, and the fishing proves fruitless. They haven't caught anything!

But, “even though everything seemed finished, Jesus “seeks” His disciples once more. It is He who goes to seek them” (Pope Francis). Without waiting for it, a man from the shore tells them: "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find something" (John 21: 6). And indeed, obeying the words of that man, fishing is superabundant: 153 fish, that is, all pagan nations, because the good news of the Gospel must reach all people and all nations.

"God allows Himself to be contemplated by those who have a pure heart" (Saint Gregory of Nyssa). For this reason, John, the beloved disciple, immediately realized: "It is the Lord" (John 21:7). Yes, the Lord Jesus is risen and lives forever; He is not a ghost. It is He in person who invites them to eat.

What an admirable gesture of affection and tenderness that of Jesus towards His own! Do we know how to thank Him? Do we listen to Him when He tells us to cast the net in the direction that He indicates? Let us be happy because the Lord has risen and invites us all to a new life, the life of the children of God that is life in the love of Christ. And let's not be afraid because true love drives out fear. Nothing, absolutely nothing is impossible for God. We only have to trust, love and pray.