

# Third Sunday of Easter

**Gospel text (Jn 21:1-19):** At that time, 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.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He then said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” [Jesus] said to him, “Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, “Follow me.”

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*“Jesus said to them, ‘Come, have breakfast.’”*

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Today, 3rd Sunday of Easter, we contemplate another apparition of Christ Resurrected, this time after evangelist John's most impressive chapter twenty first, all of it full of sacramental references, totally alive for the Christian community of that first generation, the same one that collected the evangelical testimony of the very Apostles.

After the Easter events, the Apostles seemed to go back to their usual chores, as if they had forgotten the Master had transformed them into “fishers of men”. A

mistake the Evangelist willingly admits when he says that —despite having tried their best— “that night they caught nothing” (Jn 21:3). It was the disciples' night. All the same, the appearance, at dawn, of the Lord completely overturned everything. Simon Peter, that had previously taken the responsibility for the unprofitable fishing, now pulls the net completely full: one hundred and fifty three fishes is the outcome, a figure which is the addition of the numeric values of Simon (76) and of ikhthys (=fish, 77). Quite significant!

And, when, under the glorified Lord's protective gaze and with his authority, the Apostles exert, with Peter's primacy —explicit in the triple avowal of his love for the Lord— their own evangelizing mission, the miracle happens: “they fish men”. If out of their living environment, fish die, human beings also die if nobody brings them out of the darkness and of the asphyxia of an existence away from God and surrounded by absurdity, and take them to the light, the air and the warmth of life. Of Christ's life that He, himself, nourishes from the beach of his Glory, splendid figure of the Church sacramental life and, primarily, of the Eucharist. It is in the Eucharist the Lord gives us personally the bread and, with it, He also gives himself to us, as the presence of the fish suggests; fish, which for the first Christian community, was a symbol of Christ and, therefore a Christian symbol, too.

## *Thoughts on Today's Gospel*

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“And when he had eaten before them, he took the remnant, and gave to them. To convey the truth of His resurrection, He ate with them, that they might not suspect that His appearance was not actual, but only imaginary.” (Saint Bede)

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“How does Jesus gaze at me today? How does Jesus look at me? With a call? With forgiveness? With a mission? We all are under Jesus' gaze: He always looks at us with love, asks us for something and gives us a mission.” (Francis)

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“The encounter with the risen Jesus 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, N° 448)

