

Third Sunday of Easter – May 5, 2019 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41

When the captain and the court officers had brought the apostles in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, the high priest questioned them, "We gave you strict orders, did we not, to stop teaching in that name? Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and want to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles said in reply, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as leader and savior to grant Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things, as is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him." The Sanhedrin ordered the apostles to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them. So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name.

Psalm: Ps 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13

R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew me clear and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.

O LORD, you brought me up from the netherworld; you preserved me from among those going down into the pit.

Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger lasts but a moment; a lifetime, his good will. At nightfall, weeping enters in, but with the dawn, rejoicing.

Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me; O LORD, be my helper. You changed my mourning into dancing; O LORD, my God, forever will I give you thanks.

Scripture Reading: Revelation 5:11-14

I, John, looked and heard the voices of many angels who surrounded the throne and the living creatures and the elders. They were countless in number, and they cried out in a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing." Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, everything in the universe, cry out: "To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor, glory and might, forever and ever." The four living creatures answered, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Gospel: John 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?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to Simon Peter a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." Jesus said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that Jesus 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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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the gospel be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Jesus asks Peter a question in Sunday's Gospel. How would you feel if he asked the same question of you? The former disciples were milling around on the shore of the Sea of Tiberius. (John 21:15) Jesus had appeared to them twice before, but they did not yet understand. They had not yet received the Holy Spirit. They were at loose ends. Peter got tired of standing around so he said, I'm going fishing, anybody want to come? They joined him gladly and they fished all night. This might seem crazy from our point of view, but maybe not from theirs. Maybe, among other things, it was a way to handle stress. The break of day revealed a man standing on shore. John, the mystic, the one Jesus loved especially well, whispered hoarsely, "It is the Lord"!! Peter hurled himself into the water and wobbled the hundred yards to shore, leaving to someone else the job of bringing the boat in. It seems that Peter, the denier, actually loved Jesus very much. And that is the question. Can you say that you love Jesus very much? Jesus looks at your face and addresses you by your name. "Do you love me more than these?" Such a question. What will you say? Answer the Lord when you are ready, even if it isn't perfect. Put it into words. Don't read further till you have done this. When he hears your response, listen to him say to you, "feed my lambs."

Phew. Thank God the trial is over and you don't have to deal with any more questions like that. He asks you again, by name, "do you love me?" How would such a repeated question affect you? For his part, Peter came emotionally unglued. He said loudly, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Our hearts go out to him, and also to you since you also have been asked a second time. What is your answer now? Put some thought into it. After your answer, Jesus replies, "tend my sheep." Then, yet again, not just twice but a third time, he asks the tender, unnerving question—before you have had time to settle your mind and heart. "Do you love me?" Let it echo inside you. Does he suspect that you really do not love him? You need to know. So, consider your daily attitude toward Jesus and toward God. Do not say your answer lightly. Offer it quietly in prayer to Jesus, or out loud if you wish. Take your time. Pay attention to how it feels to say it. Maybe you will reply as Peter did, "Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you." Or do you have another answer? Something like, Lord, you know everything, you know that I want to love you, but also that I want to have a good life too. You see the fear and the running away and the distraction that I live by—are you going to condemn me for them? I want to love you but ... " Jesus answers, "feed my lambs." Stay with it. Think about it. Pray about it. Doesn't it mean that we who are sinful can be part of Jesus' mission? We don't have to be perfect? We are forgiven? If the answer is yes, then let us act as the Body of Christ always does. Feed his lambs. yes, then let us consider what the Body of Christ calls us to. Feed his lambs.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. The apostles rejoiced that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor. When you encounter suffering in your life is there anything that helps you accept it? What would make a person "embrace" suffering? Do you know anyone who suffers but also exudes a kind of spiritual joy?
2. Why does John say that he heard every creature in the universe cry out the words, "to the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor, glory and might, forever and ever." How does the environment "cry out" and glorify God? How do birds and beasts? How do you?
3. Jesus was on the shore. John and the other disciples were in the fishing boat. Why do you think John recognized Jesus before the others? Discuss. There are four stories in this gospel: the appearance of Jesus to the disciples, the large catch of fish, the meal, and Peter's commission. Which do you like to think about? Why?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

May your people exult forever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit, so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

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Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen