



4-5 May 2019, 7 p.m., 6.30 a.m. | 3rd Sunday of Easter (Year C)

Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41 | Psalm 30:2, 4, 5, 6, 11-12, 13 |
Revelation 5:11-14 | John 21:1-19

JESUS LEADS AND PROVIDES FOR OUR NEEDS

Introduction

Dear sisters and brothers, as we sang in the entrance hymn, 'We'll be blest because we came'. We will be blessed at this Eucharist because we will once again experience and encounter the risen Christ, and this encounter is something that we take back into our life. Just as Jesus encountered the fishermen while they were fishing, Jesus encounters us in our daily life too.

Let us open ourselves to God's spirit and to his action in our life.

Homily

After the terrorist attack in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, Lalith Perera, who had come to preach during our parish Lenten missions, and who lives and works in that part of the country that was attacked, gave a reflection in one of his YouTube messages. He said, 'Had we listened to God, maybe we would have got an inkling about the tragedy that was about to befall us'.

What he meant is that God is constantly speaking to us, but most often, we are not attentive to him. We do not listen. Even in our prayers, we are constantly talking. The gospel of today begins with the words, 'Jesus showed himself'. What we need to do is to be present, available, attentive and listening, because it is Jesus who takes the initiative to reveal himself and talk to us. Many of us miss God's revelation because our minds are working, we are talking, we are saying prayers, but we are not listening.

Today's gospel text has some very beautiful points. The first is Peter's style of leadership. He says, 'I am going fishing'. He does not force his companions to go with him, but invites them by his suggestion. Then, the other disciples say, 'We are coming with you'. Peter is a role model for all types of leadership in the Church. He is the first Pope and leads from the front. He makes a suggestion and the other disciples respond by going along with him. Jesus first set this example by taking people along with him. Let us pray that in our various roles, beginning with myself as parish priest, and each of us as head of a family, a community leader, or a head of an organisation, our style of leadership may be like that of Peter: 'I am going...'. And the rest, seeing the plan in what the leader does, are motivated to say, 'We are coming along'. That is the way we can take people along with us without forcing our thoughts, opinions, instructions and authority on them. This is the quality of leadership that should prevail in our church – not one that imposes, but one that invites, and others join in freely and willingly.

The gospel says that the disciples go fishing and toil the whole night, but have caught nothing. Very often, in our own experience, we work hard, but there are no results. When the disciples encounter Jesus, he suggests, 'Throw the net on the other side'. They could have questioned him: 'Who are you? You are the son of a carpenter. Your trade is carpentry. Stay with that'. But, despite being seasoned fishermen, Peter and the disciples were open to Jesus' suggestion and cast their net on the other side of the boat. And there was a big haul of fish and they were successful in their endeavour. Maybe in our lives, we too think that we have our expertise. But when we find that our nets are empty despite our labour, we need to reflect on whether we are working only according to our wisdom or whether we are open to what God is asking us to do. Let us pray

that even when we feel extremely confident about knowing exactly how we should do things, let us stop and allow God to give us direction, and then we will meet with success. We need to listen to God.

After the disciples had caught the fish, the gospel says that Jesus invited them ashore, saying, ‘Come, have breakfast’. This is something that we are likely to hear in any home, perhaps on a Sunday morning, when the mother or father has prepared breakfast and calls the rest of the family to eat. Jesus was sensitive to the disciples’ needs. They had been fishing the whole night. He does not tell them to cook some of the fish that they had just caught. He has already cooked some fish and invites them to breakfast, ready and laid out for them. This is the sensitivity of Jesus, who reveals the nature of God. God is aware of our needs. He is sensitive to our conditions in life and invites us to satisfy our needs. This is the goodness of God.

Finally, there is a beautiful interaction between Jesus and Peter: ‘Do you love me?’ This is an intimate moment of exchange between Peter and Jesus. The same Peter had denied Jesus three times. Commentaries on this text say that we should read this passage in the light of the denial of Peter. Jesus does not point at Peter’s denial, but invites Peter to affirm his love for him three times. Thrice denied and thrice affirmed. When we encounter Jesus, he does not dig into our hearts and point out our sins, but asks us to affirm our love for him. That is our redemption. Let us pray that this beautiful incident can be our own as we open ourselves to Jesus who shows himself to us. Let us ask ourselves, ‘How is Jesus showing himself to me today?’ Jesus invites us to this intimate relationship with him: ‘Do you love me?’ Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

As we see in today’s gospel, Jesus was aware of the needs of his disciples and prepared breakfast for them. God our Father is aware of our needs, and so with confidence we can pray, Our Father...



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