

Homily of Third Sunday of Easter Year C

We see a new Peter in the first reading. He used to be fearful and impetuous. Transformed by the power of Christ's resurrection, he stood, boldly, before the Sanhedrin and stated, "We must obey God rather than men." The reading continues, "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."

There are times we face our own 'Sanhedrin,' that is trials, anxieties, worries, and difficulties of life. There are times the Evil One tempts us either to discourage us from doing the good things God wants us to do or lure us to commit sin. There are times situations challenge us to defend our beliefs, doctrines and practices as Christians and as Catholics. There are times our prayer life is negatively affected by the weakness of our body. At these times, Peter and the other apostles encourage us to obey God rather than 'men.' The Lord enjoins us, "Remain faithful to me until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelations).

Jesus did not count it against his disciples who deserted him during his passion. After his resurrection he appeared and revealed himself to them wherever they were. Today's Gospel is one of the appearances and revelations of Jesus to them. We have hope, therefore, that although we desert him by our sins, he does not give up on us. He continues to appear and reveal himself to us. May we be able to recognize him as John, the disciple Jesus loved, did. John recognized Jesus and said to Peter, "It is the Lord."

In the Gospel, when Jesus was crucified, died and buried, Peter believing that his discipleship with Jesus was over, decided to return to his fishing profession. Some of the disciples went with him. Since returning to fishing was not what they were supposed to do, they caught nothing throughout the night. Jesus appeared and instructed 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." The experience of Peter and the other apostles in the Gospel of today reminds us that we toil in vain without Jesus. In John 15:5 Jesus says, "Apart from me you can do nothing." In Matthew 19:26 Jesus says, "[W]ith God all things are possible."

The last part of today's Gospel speaks to me in a special way. As a priest, Jesus wants me to know him more, love him more and follow him more. That is the only way I can, properly, "feed [his] lambs," "tend [his] sheep," and "feed [his] sheep." As a priest, I have literally stretched out my hands to be led by Jesus wherever he wants me to go and to direct me to do whatever he wants me to do; even if it is where I would rather not like to go and what I would rather not like to do. Jesus says to me, "Follow me." I understand from the first reading that the most important quality for this followership is obedience to God rather than to myself, the world and the Evil One. As a priest, it is no longer my will but the will of the One who called me. All I need to do is to trust and obey. I pray with the words of St. Paul that I may be worthy of the call I have received (Ephesians 4:1).

Let us pray:

**O Lord, grant that I may see what you want me to see
That I may hear what you want me to hear
That I may speak what you want me to speak
That I may be where you want me to be
That I may do what you want me to do
That I may be who you want me to be
For your will is my peace. Amen.**

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