

Third Sunday of Easter

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

Pastor – Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Victoria, BC, Canada

“Come and have breakfast!”

This invitation from Jesus, their Teacher, was not only a call to come and eat but to hear it was also a great solace to the disciples: a consolation and comfort to the dog-tired and pessimistic disciples. Then by being addressed as children, the disciples were drawn from the ‘night of nothingness’ to the ‘dawn of abundance.’ It was an invitation, once again, to miracles: to have their hearts and eyes opened. This Gospel story further functions as a reminder to the disciples that they were not supposed to go back to their old business, or previous lives, once they had said goodbye to it. It was a reaffirmation to continue the Mission that Jesus had entrusted to them.

It worked as a plot where Jesus invited and chose them some years back and filled them with new spirit for the Gospel ministry. Now after the death of their Master, they lost all their hope, joy, and the whole world that surrounded their Master.

Within such bitter silence the leader, Peter said: “I am going fishing.” In other words, in a deeper sense, Peter resorted to going back to what was familiar: the old business that they had rejected; like boats, nets, and other equipment. Peter, who in the absence of Jesus, was supposed to lead the team in their Gospel ministry had failed to do so, as echoed by the response from the other disciples: “We also will come with you.” None of them even had the thought to say: “We are not supposed to do this anymore because we were called by the Master for some other greater mission.” And so, a beautiful daybreak at the shore of Tiberius didn’t bring any happiness to the disciples.

Why had they failed? Here is a simple story:

A disciple asked his teacher, "Who are the losers in this life?" The teacher calmly answered: "The people who; even though they know the path to travel and are convinced of the truth to hold on to; who have the ‘One’ who gives life before their eyes; have a good knowledge of where they need to go, and recognize the good they should do, but do not live accordingly.”



In the Gospels, the disciples of Jesus were constantly being shown to have been given all the knowledge of the heavenly truths, but they never seemed to grasp, understand, or take care of the knowledge given to them.

Now, that morning, Jesus once again entered their lives to bring them back to their real purpose and mission: the life of discipleship, with a tender wake-up call calling out to them as His “children”, asking them to cast their nets over the right side of the boat. At His command, they catch a great school of fish. He then invites them to have a breakfast of fish and bread prepared by Him. The fact that Jesus chose to appear on the seashore was to remind them that once upon a time, also along a seashore, the same Lord had called them to be His followers; but they missed allusion, being blinded by the current dire situation in their lives. However, through this miracle of the catch of fish, mirroring the first encounter between Peter and Jesus, the disciples of Jesus received the grace and fellowship to be with their Master once again.

There was an account of a conversation between St. Francis of Assisi and his disciple, Brother Leo, as they walked through a vineyard. Looking at the ripe bunches of grapes, Brother Leo asked St. Francis: "Do you still remember the tempting memories of the sweet wine you drank in the past?"

St. Francis smiled softly: “I am now in a greater ecstasy than that.”

The disciples of Jesus after seeing this great miracle catch realised that it was the Lord calling out to them from the beach. The miracle had brought them back to their mission, and from then on, to new ecstasies that the Lord gifted them.

In our lives, we may also feel the absence of God: the darkness of tiredness and the morning of nothingness, as in the lives of the disciples after the death of Jesus. But this account of the Gospel reveals that the Master is always somewhere at the shore of our lives, waiting for us with a tender heart and a calm call to us as His ‘children’; to feel that He is with us and ready to guide us. The only thing for us to do is to just search for His presence in the seashore of our lives. Like disciples, we too are called to embody the Gospel in this world.

Let us reflect: when we encounter difficulty in life, do we go back and retreat to the old business in which Christ has no role?

As Easter People, let us also fulfil our mission of spreading the Gospel of the love of God in this world, in our parish, and in the families.
