

## **HOMILY for 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY of EASTER – Year C**

This Sunday's Gospel talks about fishing. Reflecting on that, I'm reminded of this cute story that I'd like to share with you.

After a long day of fishing without even a nibble, a man said disgustedly to his companion, 'You know the saying, 'Give a man a fish, & he'll eat for a day; teach a man to fish, & he'll eat for a lifetime?''

"Yes?"

"Well, whoever said it wasn't a fisherman."

In this Sunday's Gospel, we were told that Peter & his boat mates went fishing & struggled all night, but caught nothing. It must be frustrating & despondent for them. They worked hard all night, but got nothing in return. That is how some of us might feel at times. We have tried to follow God's Commandments & worked hard every day, but sometimes things do not turn out the way we have hoped & prayed for. But, don't worry because the risen Christ would be there to help us & show us the way as He did to Peter & his boat mates. Here is how today's Gospel tells us about the risen Christ's appearance & support to Peter & his boat mates as following: "...All through the night, they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus was standing on the shore, though none of the disciples knew it was Jesus. He said to them, 'Children, have you caught anything to eat?' 'Not a thing,' they answered. 'Cast your net off to the starboard side,' he suggested, 'and you will find something.' So, they made a cast, & took so many fish that they could not haul the net in. Then, the disciple Jesus loved cried out to Peter, 'It is the Lord!'"

First of all, Peter & most of his boat mates did not recognize Jesus in their dark, long night when He showed up to check on them. That is how most of us would have felt on our dark nights of the soul. We have felt so hopeless & confused that we could not see God's presence & help for us. Sometimes it takes on the form of a good friend or a kind family member who would show up when we have felt down in the dump & despondent to comfort & encourage us. That kind Guardian Angel might be the risen Christ who came to give Peter & other disciples a helping hand when they felt like hitting rock bottom. Unfortunately, the only one who could recognize Him immediately was John because he loved Jesus wholeheartedly like Mary Magdalen. Peter did not seem to recognize Jesus at first; & that is why Jesus had to ask him three times, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" So, the only way we could recognize Jesus in those dark, difficult moments of our lives is whether we would love Him. So, love is the spectacles that would help us see Jesus clearly in our lives.

Second, when Jesus suggested Peter to cast the net certain way to try his luck again, Peter could have refused to listen to it, or worst yet do the opposite. Instead, Peter listened to Jesus' suggestion & put aside his own ego & pride. He did not tell Jesus that he knew everything about fishing & would not need God's help at all. Rather, Peter humbly welcomed Jesus' help & followed the Lord's guidance on how to turn a bad & hopeless situation into a wonderful & promising one. That wise decision helped Peter catch a net full of fish, one hundred fifty-three of them. That is a great reward & a fine moral lesson for us to remember. When we let God guide our work & daily lives, it will turn out better than trying to do it all by ourselves. When we are open to the work of the Holy Spirit or the divine consultation/participation, we would often end up with miraculous results in the end. But, if we close up our hearts & minds to God's

messages, especially in tough moments of our lives, we would prevent God from doing awesome miracles for us. If Peter did that to Jesus, he would never experience the spectacular miracle like he did in today's Gospel.

Third, like the saying in my cute story above, "Give a man a fish, & he'll eat for a day; teach a man to fish, & he'll eat for a lifetime," that is exactly what Jesus did with Peter in today's Gospel. Jesus could have snapped His fingers & given Peter all those fish without making him cast the net a certain way, or doing anything at all. If Jesus did that, He would give Peter a fish that would last only for a day. But, Jesus wanted Peter to take part in the miracle & remember it for the rest of his life. That is why He made Peter take the boat out again, but this time he would follow Jesus' way. Peter did exactly as being instructed & was able to experience an awesome miracle. My friends, we often want God to do a miracle for us all by Himself & would not want to participate in it at all. Today's Gospel reminds us that we need to be involved & help God make miracles happen like Peter did. For God wants us to experience more miracles in our daily lives.

Lastly, every time Peter told Jesus that he loved Him, the Lord would command him to take care of His sheep or lambs. He wanted Peter to show his love for his Master by looking after His Church & sharing that same love with the people of God. I'm sure Jesus wants to say the same thing to us, namely, if we claim that we love Jesus, we must learn to help out & care for one another. Unfortunately, some Christians have said that they love Jesus wholeheartedly, but they would treat another human being horribly. For these folks, the love for Jesus is different from the one for neighbors. But, Jesus wants Peter & us to remember that they are both the same. We must show our love for Jesus in real actions by loving our neighbors.

My dear brothers & sisters, it is difficult for us to recognize the risen Christ in our daily lives, especially in those dark, difficult moments. We sure find it challenging to listen to God's voice everyday & follow the divine guidance for us. However, today's Gospel reminds us that when we love Jesus wholeheartedly, we will be able to spot Him easily in our chaotic world. Moreover, we would be open to His suggestions for our daily problems & experience awesome miracles like Peter did. Of course, our love for Jesus would help us learn to love our neighbors without any hesitation.