

Third Sunday of Easter



Show Us Where to Fish

God of great beginnings,
you who filled the fishing nets
to overflowing,
give us too the thrill
of your abundance,
your generous outpouring.
We who often have empty nets
need your direction.
Show us where to fish;
bless our efforts with your grace.
Then, like the first disciples,
we too will taste your goodness.
We ask this through our Lord,
Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns
with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, April 14, 2013
Present in Ordinary Tasks

Today's Readings: Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41; Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13 (2a); Revelation 5:11-14; John 21:1-19. As today's Gospel begins, the disciples must have been bewildered. Although they had seen the risen Lord, they weren't sure what came next. Naturally, they returned to their familiar routine: fishing. The smell of the sea, the swish of the waves, the texture of nets, the rhythm of common work must have been reassuring.

But did they wonder if they would resume this work as though the remarkable chapter of Jesus's life hadn't happened? Would it really be "business as usual" again? With such doubt in their minds, it was an especially bad time to get skunked! Any fisherperson knows how demoralizing that can be: the time wasted, the embarrassment on docking, the empty nets.

Then, hope is restored by a stranger on shore, telling them where to cast. It's heartening that Jesus becomes involved in their ordinary tasks. He doesn't wait for the time they're in the synagogue studying Scripture, or silently praying. His attitude seems to influence the Benedictines, who handle ordinary tools—shovels, computers, spatulas, hammers—as reverently as they do altar vessels.

So too, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta was genuinely interested in how the beggars had done each day, squatting with them to discuss their "take." Apparently Jesus and the saints don't breathe some rarified air apart from human toil. They join us in the struggle—and probably grin at the bursting nets. Then, the puzzled disciples at breakfast "taste and see" the Lord's goodness (Psalm 34:8).



This Week at Home

Monday, April 15

A Complex Mix

The crowd that seeks Jesus in today's Gospel has mixed motives, like most human beings. They've realized that he crossed the sea in an unusual way (see the previous verses: 16–21 for his walking on water). They've enjoyed eating the bread he provided. So, do they simply seek more magic tricks, or do they yearn for something deeper? St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged people to pay attention to their deep desires because God plants them within the human heart. When you examine why you attend church or read this reflection, do you find a mixture? Guilt, hope, habit, integrity, fatigue, longing for meaning? What are your deepest, most authentic desires for yourself? Today's Readings: Acts 6:8–15; Psalm 119:23–24, 26–27, 29–30 (1ab); John 6:22–29.

Tuesday, April 16

A Prayer for Bread

Turn the words of the crowd in today's Gospel into your own prayer: "Sir, give us this bread always" (6:34). Repeat it to yourself quietly throughout the day. How is it answered? All people know the difference between being tired and hungry and being rested and well fed. The Jewish people knew they were nourished by the Word of God. Where do you find strength, inspiration, and nurture? Ask God to give whatever feeds you today. Pray too for those baptized or confirmed at the Easter Vigil, that they might find what they seek in their new discipleship. Today's Readings: Acts 7:51–58:1a; Psalm 31:3cd–4, 6 and 7b and 8a, 17 and 21ab (6a); John 6:30–35.

Wednesday, April 17

Abundant Feast

Jesus's response to the crowd's request yesterday comes in today's Gospel: "I am the bread of life." Think back on the best meals or breads you've had, and how Jesus has fed you in other ways: perhaps through the liturgy, friends, family,

grace, education, beauty, work, health, books, nature, art, music. Why would we ever turn away from such good things? By the same token, how could we not seek a regular, daily time to be alone with Christ in intimate prayer? Today's Readings: Acts 8:1b–8; Psalm 66:1–3a, 4–5, 6–7a (1); John 6:35–40.

Thursday, April 18

Steppingstones of Learning

In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "And they shall all be taught by God" (6:45). Looking back over your life, how have you been taught by God? (Avoid academic learning such as math or history; focus on what you've learned in heart or soul.) Have you learned more from adversity or from blessing? Discuss this with a friend, or draw the steppingstones in your journal: important learnings that have brought you to this point. Today's Readings: Acts 8:26–40; Psalm 66:8–9, 16–17, 20 (1); John 6:44–51.

Friday, April 19

Stuck—or Surprised?

Openness to surprise is a key quality for a follower of Jesus. Some of Jesus's listeners obviously lacked that openness. They "disputed among themselves" and questioned the literal meaning of his words. Clinging to the memory of manna God provided their ancestors, they could not admit that Jesus offered something far greater: eternal life. How often have we looked to the secure past, instead of welcoming the present surprise? Are we open to what God wants to give us, or set on what we want? Today's Readings: Acts 9:1–20; Psalm 117:1bc, 2 (Mark 16:15); John 6:52–59.

Saturday, April 20

Turning Away

Imagine yourself as one of the disciples who "turned back and no longer went about with [Jesus]" (6:66). How did your life change when you refused to accept his difficult teaching? Did you feel more secure then, or more unsettled? What, if anything, did you miss? Did you ever regret your decision? Today's Readings: Acts 9:31–42; Psalm 116:12–13, 14–15, 16–17 (12); John 6:60–69.

