

## GOSPEL

JOHN 21:1-14

Jesus showed himself again to his disciples. It was by the Sea of Tiberias, and it happened like this: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two more of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said, 'I'm going fishing.' They replied, 'We'll come with you.' They went out and got into the boat but caught nothing that night.

It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus called out, 'Have you caught anything, friends?' And when they answered, 'No,' he said, 'Throw the net out to starboard and you'll find something.' So they dropped the net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in. The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' At these words 'It is the Lord,' Simon Peter, who had practically nothing on, wrapped his cloak round him and jumped into the water. The other disciples came on in the boat, towing the net and the fish; they were only about a hundred yards from land.

As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread there, and a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it. Jesus said, 'Bring some of the fish you have just caught.' Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore, full of big fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them; and in spite of there being so many the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples was bold enough to ask, 'who are you?'; they knew quite well it was the Lord. Jesus then stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to the disciples after rising from the dead.

The Gospel of the Lord.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In the midst of feeling alone and separated from Jesus, Simon Peter went back to his old life – fishing. Do you ever struggle in your relationship with Jesus? How do you deal with feelings of disconnection?

2. For Simon Peter, Jesus used an abundant catch of fish to connect with him not once but twice. Has there been a way that Jesus has consistently tried to get your attention in your life?

## A REFLECTION BY POPE FRANCIS

Today's Gospel recounts the third apparition of the Risen Jesus to the disciples, with the account of the miraculous catch on the shore of the lake of Galilee. The narrative is situated in the context of the everyday life of the disciples, who returned to their land and to their work as fishermen, after the shocking days of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. It was difficult for them to understand what had taken place. Even though everything seemed finished, Jesus "seeks" his disciples once more. It is He who goes to seek them. This time he meets them at the lake, where they have spent the night in their boats catching nothing. The nets appear empty, in a certain sense, like the tally of their experience with Jesus: they met him, they left everything to follow him, full of hope... and now? Yes, they saw he was risen, but then they were thought: "He went away and left us.... It was like a dream..."

So it is that at sunrise Jesus presents himself on the lakeshore; however they do not recognize him. The Lord says to those tired and disappointed fishermen: "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some". The disciples trust in Jesus and the result is an incredibly abundant catch. At this point John turns to Peter and says: "It is the Lord!". Right away Peter throws himself into the water and swims to the shore, toward Jesus. In that exclamation: "It is the Lord!", there is all the enthusiasm of the Paschal faith, full of joy and wonder, which sharply contrasts with the disappearance, the dejection, the sense of powerlessness that had accumulated in the disciples' hearts. The presence of the Risen Jesus transforms everything: darkness has become light, futile work has again become fruitful and promising, the sense of weariness and abandonment give way to a new impetus and to the certainty that He is with us.

From that time, these same sentiments enliven the Church, the Community of the Risen One. All of us are the community of the Risen One! At first glance it might

sometimes seem that the darkness of evil and the toil of daily living have got the upper hand, the Church knows with certainty that the now everlasting light of Easter shines upon those who follow the Lord Jesus. The great message of the Resurrection in-stills in the hearts of believers profound joy and invincible hope. Christ is truly risen! Today too, the Church continues to make this joyous message resound: joy and hope continue to flow in hearts, in faces, in gestures, in words. We Christians are all called to communicate this message of resurrection to those we meet, especially to those who suffer, to those who are alone, to those who find themselves in precarious conditions, to the sick, to refugees, to the marginalized. Let us make a ray of the light of the Risen Christ, a sign of his powerful mercy, reach everyone.

May he, the Lord, also renew in us the Paschal faith. May he render us ever more aware of our mission at the service of the Gospel and of our brothers and sisters; may he fill us with his Holy Spirit so that, sustained by the intercession of Mary, with all the Church we may proclaim the greatness of his love and the abundance of his mercy.

## REFLECTION QUESTION

- What has struck you from this reflection by the Holy Father?

## PRAYER

*Spend some time in prayer with one another*

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Move to prayers of thanks and praise to God
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps reciting the 'Glory Be' or similar prayer.