

Homily for Friday in Easter Week

Friday, April 21, 2017

Today's Gospel is a simple story that helps us to understand how we live our lives each day as people of the Resurrection. This story shows us the disciples after their encounter with Jesus in Jerusalem. They now go north to Galilee, to the area of Palestine where they had grown up. Peter, as he always does in the Gospels, takes the initiative and tells the others he is going fishing. All night they have been at it and have caught nothing. This tells us something about life after the Resurrection. There are times when we are doing the tasks and chores of every day. They do not seem to be going very well, and we can feel frustrated and discouraged. Even though they had experienced the Resurrected Christ, the disciples still had to live their lives in the world where there are set backs and challenges. They would experience this even more as they began to proclaim the Gospel of the Resurrection, where there would be many who would oppose them. But they would persevere because of what we read happens next.

Jesus from the shore calls out to them, as day is breaking. And in language that is so warm and comforting he say:

“Children, have you any fish?” They answered him, “No.” 6 He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish.

He calls them “children” a term of such endearment and care, even though they are grown men. Because of the Resurrection of Jesus, we can always remember that we have a spiritual family, with parents who care for us and reach into our souls. We affirm that the Virgin Mary is our Blessed Spiritual Mother and that Jesus, both in his teaching and example showed us that God is our Father in Heaven. We are not alone. God is truly with us. And as we allow ourselves to remember this, we can allow Jesus, through the Church, to direct us when we need council and support. For this is exactly what Jesus does next. He directs them to drop the nets over the right side of the boat where there is a school of fish resulting in a catch of 153 of them.

This part of the Easter story is an invitation for us to remember that as we continue to live our lives and experience and joys and challenges of living in this world we don't have to try and figure everything out for ourselves. Jesus wants to not only direct and lead us but he wants to have regular fellowship with us. For we are told that next the disciples come to shore where Jesus has prepared a meal for them.

Every time we partake of the Mass, it is our way to come to shore with Jesus and be renewed and refreshed by him so that we can then carry on with the work, play and prayer that characterize the lives of those who are an Easter People.

Allow Jesus to speak to us with tender care, hearing his loving address: “children” and so live with confidence in love of God, especially when times are hard and we are frustrated.