

Homily for the 3rd Sunday of Easter 2022 Year C

Eager to put the trauma and disgrace of Good Friday out of their minds, the apostles have slipped back to life as it was for them before the call of Jesus. They have just come back empty handed from a night's fishing when a stranger on the shore urges them to cast their nets once more and, even though it is daylight and the fish would have swum to the bottom of the lake, they catch a miraculous number of fish.

Because of this they recognised the Lord and accepted his invitation to share breakfast with Him by the lakeside.

Jesus was showing them that He was not some sort of ghost. He could physically eat and drink, He could be touched by a doubting Thomas, and though they would not yet understand it, He had a new glorified physical existence that could pass through the walls of the upper room.

Peter must have been deeply ashamed and feeling very uncomfortable, for it was only a short time before that he had cursed and denied that he knew Jesus. But Jesus, with a sensitivity almost beyond belief, seems to know exactly how Peter was feeling and gave him a second chance, a chance to reclaim his love and loyalty to the Risen Christ.

Not just once, but three times, Peter confesses his love for the Risen Christ, and his authority, lost by his denials, is now restored through his confession of faith.

His position as head of the Apostles is clarified, and he is given the enormous task to guard the whole flock in Christ's name, a role that will eventually lead to his violent and painful death.

Amazingly, Christ leaves his church in the hands of a man who has failed Him. Failure counts for nothing in the eyes of Christ, and Peter comes to know God's grace through failure.

Like Peter, we too, in our failures, can encounter the finger of God pointing the way, awakening within us an awareness of our helplessness.

Paradoxically, our failures do not mean that we love God less. Our actions do not always reflect our deeper feelings. Peter's denial of Christ did not quench

his love for Jesus. Despite the shame of what he had done, that deep love was still there, evident when he said, “You know that I love you”.

Peter trusted that here was a man who could read his heart. Whatever it was about this lakeside encounter, it restored Peter’s confidence, and gave him the strength to renew his faith and throw himself into the spreading of the Gospel.

We all love God, now and again with varying degrees of intensity, but sometimes we say and do things that are totally inconsistent with that love. We question ourselves, “How could I have possibly said that or done that”? Then it is the time, like Peter, to trust in the knowledge that God has of our love. Then we need to seek His mercy and forgiveness.

It was the depth of Peter’s love that restored his forgiveness. It is the measure of our love for God and God's love for us that will always guarantee our forgiveness.