

Our Lady of Lourdes Church

Third Sunday of Easter

April 18, 2010

Readings:

Acts of the Apostles 5:27-32, 40-41

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:1-9

Fr. Bob

I imagine for those who did not witness any of Jesus' resurrection moments, that it was felt that it was all over when they took Jesus' body off the cross. This would have been especially true of those who wanted Jesus to die. He was an embarrassment, he was a problem, he was dangerous. And at his death, many were relieved that the so called problem had been taken care of. They had a brief respite, to relax, and to begin to bring things back to normal before all the business with Jesus had begun. For a brief time, it was a good time for them.

For the disciples it was a different matter. They had been traumatized on Good Friday, but had also experienced that first Easter. At first, they were hiding out, afraid of the authorities and what they might do. They were scared for their lives. They may have withdrawn from the world around them, but they did manage to stay together. But they also needed time: time to heal from the trauma, time to heal from their fears, and time to figure out the next step. While the authorities were relaxing, the disciples were gaining strength. They were, in our words today, on a retreat, that was being directed by Christ himself. He was appearing to them at different moments, he continued to reassure them, he continued to heal them and get them ready.

We see that in the way that Jesus treated Peter. Peter had denied Christ three times. And all Christ wanted from him in our reading today was to affirm him three times. And so asked, three times, 'do you love me.' And three times, amidst some frustration, Peter admitted the truth that despite the fear that had caused the denials, the truth was that Peter loved him. And on that day, Jesus healed him. And he also healed the other disciples that had failed Jesus in one way or another. He had forgiven them all and then they were ready to move on to the next part of their journey. We see what that meant for the authorities in our first reading. They thought they were done with Christ and instead, through his disciples, he kept coming back. They were not going to lose him.

So perhaps today, a couple of lessons for us in our modern world. Everyone, at some time, seems to take a respite from Christ, where we go along with our own lives, and we forget and therefore don't realize the power of Christ that is persistent. The word of God, that cannot be eliminated from this world. We forget who is ultimately in charge. But he will always find a way to remind us. So...to put it simply, why don't we just stay with him and just make it easier for ourselves, and rid ourselves of the illusion that we're in control. And a second lesson. Peter did approach Jesus on the shore and was probably filled with a little fear. He had totally betrayed Christ. Instead, he did find Christ to be persistent, but more important he found him to be forgiving and reconciling. There was no last moment where Christ had enough. There was no last moment, when Christ said that he was finished with any of his disciples who had failed him. He was waiting for them on the shore and was ready to feed them once again. Sometimes, like the authorities of the day, we believe in our own power and our own comfort. But Christ will come again and again into our lives and we will be humbled. There is never a time he will reject us and say that he is finished. And his word will, despite our failures, continue to be spread by anyone who is willing to come back to the shore, to greet Christ, to be fed by him and to listen to his word.