

## Lectio Divina. Third Easter Sunday. Cycle C

*Vice Province of Aconcagua, Santiago (Chile), Sister Carmen Rosa Murcia Gualteros,  
May 1st, 2022.-*

### PRAYER

From our personal or communal experience, let us invoke *Ruah* or listen to the following song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zasyz-tJkOg>

### GOSPEL

Let us read slowly this Gospel in such a way that we can get into the text with understanding: **John 21: 1-19.**

*“After this, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way. Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee’s sons, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We also will come with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Children, have you caught anything to eat?” They answered him, “No.” So he said to them, “Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something.” So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish. When they climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you just caught.” So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three\* large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come, have breakfast.” And none of the disciples dared to ask him,\* “Who are you?” because they realized it was the Lord. Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. This was now the third time<sup>h</sup> Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.*

*Jesus and Peter, When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He then said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said*

to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” [Jesus] said to him, “Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, “Follow me.”

## IN-DEPTH TEXT ANALYSIS

### Historical Context

John’s Gospel, written after decades of Christian experience, enhances Jesus and his performance with a depth that was never developed before by the evangelists. He presents Jesus’ sayings and facts in the light of His resurrection.

The disciples started to discover slowly the meaning of all that they had lived and experienced by being with Him, when Jesus returned to life from the dead (2:22), enlightened by the Holy Spirit sent by the Father (14:26), which gives clear evidence.

The text that we meditate on this third Sunday after Easter, is a part of the epilogue of the Gospel written after the death of the beloved disciple. It talks about the third encounter of the Risen Christ with his disciples on the shores of lake Galilee. It is written with a clear intention of catechesis in order to strengthen the faith of those Christians who live tough times of persecution causing some of them to reject the faith that they have received.

We can reflect on this text from different points of view:

- Without “Jesus”, *nothing is possible*. “*that night they caught nothing*” 21:3b
- The shore. “*Jesus stood on the shore*”. 21:4
- Someone waits for them. “*Come and have breakfast*” 21:5
- Not just anyone can do it: “Do you love me?... Do you love me? ... Do you love me?” 21: 15-17
- Living in love. “*Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?*”
- Experience of God. “*You know that I love you*”.

## POINTS FOR MEDITATION

### Night – Dawn

It was night and the disciples go fishing. The twelve were not together, not complete; the group got separated when their Lord was crucified. They return again to their small boats and the nets that they had left behind to follow Jesus. Everything is over, they are alone again, fishing is a complete failure, the nets came back empty.

In this context of failure and darkness, the narrative tells that night was turning to dawn when Jesus showed up on the “shore”. However, the disciples did not recognize him from their small boats.

The “night” is the main symbolism of the fishing in the middle of the sea and, the actual reality we currently go through in our world, the evangelist wants to express the absence of Jesus who is actually the Light. Without the presence of Risen Lord, without his spirit and his guiding word, there is no fruitful evangelization.

In our journey with Jesus today, we are able to perceive critical situation of many parishes and Christian communities. Strengths are diminishing. The most committed Christians are increasing to take on all kinds of tasks; always the same people doing everything.

*Do we have to keep intensifying our efforts and look for more performance at any price or do we have to stop in order to take care of the living presence of the Risen Lord in our work?*

The most important aspect is not “doing a lot of things” but taking care of the quality of our human and evangelical service. The essential element is not our activism but the testimony of our life that we radiate as Christians. We cannot stay on the “faith epidermis”. We have to take care of, above all, the essential. It is in this reality of darkness, neglect, and feeling that everything is lost, when Jesus confirms Peter in his faith.

### Do you love me?

Peter has expressed his absolute support to Jesus in several occasions. However, in the moment of truth he is the first to deny him. Before entrusting him his sheep, Jesus asks Peter one essential question: Do you love me more than these? He does not ask: Do you feel strong? Do you know my doctrine? Are you able to lead my people? No. It is the love of Jesus that qualifies one to lead, guide and encourage his followers, just like He used to

do it. Peter answers him humbly: You know that I love you. But Jesus asks him the question twice more, each time sharper: Do you love me? Do you really love me?

Peter's insecurity increases. Every time it is more difficult for him to declare his support to Jesus. In the end, he is filled with sadness. He doesn't know what to answer anymore. "You know everything". As Peter becomes aware of the importance of love, Jesus starts to entrust him his sheep.

This question that the Risen Lord asks Peter reminds us as believers that the vitality of faith is not about intellectual understanding but about true love for Jesus, whatever may be the cost.

The experience of love for Christ could give us the strength to free our life from so much cold and calculating reasons, to love always without expecting any gain, to renounce small and insignificant advantages in our favor.

Christian faith is "an experience of love". Believing in Jesus Christ is much more than "accepting truths" about him. We truly believe when we experience that he becomes the center of our thinking, our desires and our whole life.

We are the first to listen to Jesus' question: "Do you love me more than these, do you love my sheep?"

Perhaps something really new would happen in our lives if we were able to listen sincerely to the question of the Risen One: "You, do you love me?"

Moment of silence to listen to Jesus and answer his question: do you love me, do you love me, do you love me?

## **WE CONTEMPLATE FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF LOVE, OF LIVING IN LOVE...**

*"The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord" 21:7*

*"Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" 21:15*

Lonergan is the last theologian who reminds in a profound way that **"to believe is to be in love with God"**. What else can it be to trust in a God that is pure love?

Nothing gets us closer to the heart of the Christian faith than the experience of falling in love. According to the living tradition of the mystical theology of the fourth Gospel: *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.”*

Falling in love is probably the summit experience of the human existence. There is nothing more pleasant, nothing that fills the heart so much. Nothing frees us more strongly from loneliness and selfishness. Nothing that gives us passion for love and makes our life more powerful. The mystics know it and this is why when they talk about their faith and commitment, they express themselves like the ones in love.

They feel so attracted by Him that God becomes the center of their life just like the one who is in love starts to live in some way in the beloved one. They would not know how to live without God. He fills their life with joy and light. Without him, there would be sadness and sorrow. Nothing and nobody could fill the emptiness in their hearts.

One might think that all this is for people who are especially gifted to live the mystery of God. In reality, these believers who are in love with God tells us where true faith will lead us. To be a believer is not to live "submitted" to God; first of all, it is to live "in love" with God. For the person in love, it is no burden to remember the loved one, to be in tune with him or her, to correspond to his or her desires.

For a believer who is in love with God, it is not a burden to be in silence before him, to welcome him in prayer, to listen to his will, to live by his Spirit. Even if we forget it again and again, religion is not an obligation, it is not about complying with rules, it is about falling in love.

In this context, the Gospel scene of the fourth Gospel has a deep meaning. Jesus' question to Peter is decisive: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter's answer is moving: "Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you".

*From my experience of living in love with Jesus Christ, in the style of Marie Poussepin and St. Dominic, I proclaim my deep my commitment to Him, who is waiting for me on the shore and asks me the same question: “do you love me?”*

## **PRAYER**

To finish, let us pray from our communal or personal experience or else listen to this song “Only in God” by John Michael Talbot. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAiGAYp22JI>