

**3rd Sunday of Easter by Father Dave – (Acts 5: 27
– 32, 40 & 41; Revelation 5: 11 – 14; John 21: 1 – 19)**

How eager are we to live our Faith?

How open are we to suffering for our Faith?

Today's Scripture Readings approach these thoughts and tell us how the early Christians (more specifically – the Apostles) accepted and lived their new-found Faith. From Acts of the Apostles, we learn how the Holy Spirit transformed Peter, whom Jesus had appointed head of His Church, from a man fearful of powerful men into a brave witness to the Resurrection. Peter stands before the Jewish Supreme Court – the Sanhedrin – boldly announcing that he and the others must obey God rather than men.

The selection from the Book of Revelation presents John's vision of the Risen Lord as the glorified "Lamb of God," enthroned in Heaven. The entirety of Revelation is an expression of Christian hope in the Risen Lord – written to bolster the Faith of the early Christian community.

Today's Gospel tells the post-Resurrection story of our merciful Savior Who goes in search of His disappointed and dejected disciples. In the first part of the Gospel account, Jesus appears to His disciples and gives them a symbol of their mission in a miraculous catch of fish followed by a grilled fish breakfast prepared by Jesus. The second part is a dialogue between Jesus and Simon during which Simon Peter is asked three times whether he loves Jesus, and he answers each time that he does, in fact, love Jesus. The two images used in the story – fishing and shepherding, are the duties of the Church in her missionary work.

This past Wednesday (April 27) we heard the beginning of the story in Acts of the Apostles. We pick up where we left off. This story, and the Apostles zeal in proclaiming the Risen Lord, has always fascinated me. In Wednesday's account, we see how they were locked up for preaching Jesus. But in the middle of the night an angel releases them from the jail, leads them safely past the sleeping guards, and takes them to the city where they can resume their preaching at the Temple. In the morning all the guards and religious leaders are in disbelief as to how they escaped without any notice. Resuming the story this weekend, the Apostles celebrate and share their intimacy with the Lord as they continue their preaching – but only to be questioned, again, by the leaders. Their response was – that they "must obey God rather than men." How many of us would be so bold as to say something like this, and then continue preaching in the light of further punishment?

And the Gospel – a beautiful Resurrection story. Peter and the others decide to go back to their former ways of life – fishing. By morning, these seasoned fisherman have caught nothing, and then they hear this voice off-shore telling them where to cast the nets. With that cast, they

haul in so many that their boat is on the verge of sinking. Having read on this, I borrow from another reflection that looks at it this way: often we need to be renewed in our call in life, as well as in our ability to recognize the Lord Who is always right before us. We need to be re-nued and re-animated by the memory that Jesus has much more power than we do. And, especially when we sense that our "nets" are pretty empty, we need to jump in the water and swim to the shore to get closer to the One Who alone can fill any empty nets – the Lord Who can fill any emptiness in our lives.

Like Peter who denied Jesus three times in the Garden, we often (though not as forward as Peter) deny Christ any time we sin. And as in the case of Peter, Jesus is always asking us if we love Him. Loving Jesus means loving those who He cares for. If I am willing to fall in love with Jesus, I fall in love with the way He is. I fall in love with His style of loving – desiring to imitate Him in feeding His sheep / caring for His sheep.

As we reflect on these readings for this weekend, we come to realize how often we fail to acknowledge the presence of the Risen Lord behind our unexpected successes and achievements, or healings, or even at our parties celebrating with us. He is present in our pains and sufferings. He visits us through our friends and well-wishers. And, above all, He is present in our Christian worship – in the Word as it is proclaimed, and in the Sacrament of His Love.

It's one thing for me to think that my life and all that I say and do is in my control. It's consoling to accept that our lives, *really*, are in God's hands. As we hear Jesus saying to Peter – "Follow Me.," and as we reflect on the Apostles in the Acts of the Apostles, may we always be willing to follow where He leads us, and may we always be willing to do His will – even to the point of others questioning or ridiculing us.

Let us Pray for the Conversion of the World
& for Peace

JN 21, 19 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.”

FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST, HOW?

LK 9, 23 Then he said to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

TWO KEY ELEMENTS OF THIS PASSAGE

1. To deny the self...deny yourself of your comfort zone.
2. Take up the cross daily...such sacrifice is your cross to take up daily.

LK 9, 59 And to another he said, “Follow me.” But he replied, “[Lord,] let me go first and bury my father.”

60 But he answered him, **“Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”**

61 And another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home.”

62 [To him] Jesus said, “No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Jesus speaks about the severity and the unconditional nature of discipleship. Even family ties and filial obligations, such as burying one’s parents, cannot distract one no matter how briefly from proclaiming the kingdom of God.

MT 19, 27 Then Peter said to him in reply, “We have given up everything and followed you. What will there be for us?”

29 And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life.

After all our sacrifices in following you, then what? **Jesus Christ is assuring us THE GRACE OF ETERNAL LIFE.**

We can follow God in whatever status of life we are into (married, single, nun, cleric, professionals, rich, poor). Always remember that following Him means to sacrifice and part of that sacrifice is our very own family yet very rewarding-**ETERNAL LIFE.**

Saints & Celebrations for this week –

If today (**May 1**) were not a Sunday, we would be celebrating the **Feast of St Joseph the Worker** (although we can remember him as a worker – any day of the year). On May 1, 1955, Pope Pius XII addressed the Catholic Association of Italian Workers and declared that this day would be known as the feast day of St Joseph the Worker. In the Communist bloc, May 1 is celebrated as May Day, which glorifies the relationship between the worker and the socialist state. It is obvious that the Church was very concerned with this, and wanted to demonstrate to its faithful that it was equally concerned about the plight of the working man and woman. Joseph, a carpenter, taught his trade to his Son, Jesus, and provided for his family. It is especially important to remember this human element when contemplating the lives of both St Joseph and the Holy Family.

Let us pray: *Lord God, Maker of all things, You give us Skill of mind and body to labor and to serve in this world. May we follow the way of St. Joseph who worked with Christ at his side, and may all that we do be a sign of Your greatness and power. AMEN*

May 3 – St Philip and St James, apostles. St Philip - was born at Bethsaida in Galilee. He was one of the apostles and a disciple of John the Baptist. Philip heard the call of Jesus, “Follow Me,” and accompanied Jesus on His public ministry. He is mentioned in St John’s Gospel, and invited he invited the apostle, Bartholomew, to come and see Christ. At the Last Supper he said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough.” Philip was present with the apostles who spent ten days waiting in the upper room in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

St James – also known as James the Less, was one of the twelve apostles and is called “the son of Alphaeus” and “the brother of the Lord” in the Gospels. It is assumed, however, that he was most likely a cousin of Jesus. He is believed to be the author of the Epistle of St James in the New Testament. James was appointed the Bishop of Jerusalem and was present at the Council of Jerusalem. He was also present with the apostles in the upper room awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. James remained in Jerusalem after Pentecost and was stoned to death there in the year 62.