

First reading Acts 5:27b-32, 40b-41

‘We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit.’

In those days: The high priest questioned the Apostles, saying, ‘We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.’ But Peter and the Apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.’

Having called in the Apostles, the council beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name.

Responsorial Psalm 30(29): 2-6, 11-13b. R2a

I will extol you, Lord, for you have raised me up.

I will extol you, Lord, for you have raised me up,
and have not let my enemies rejoice over me.
O Lord, you have lifted up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from those who sink into the pit.

Sing psalms to the Lord, you faithful ones;
give thanks to his holy name.

His anger lasts a moment; his favour all through life.
At night come tears, but dawn brings joy.

Hear, O Lord, and have mercy on me;
be my helper, O Lord.
You have changed my mourning into dancing.
O Lord my God, I will thank you for ever.

Second reading Revelation 5:11-14

‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth.’

I, John looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!’ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!’ And the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’ and the elders fell down and worshipped.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Christ is risen, who created all things
and has shown compassion on the human race.

Alleluia.

Gospel John 21:1-19

‘Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.’

At that time: Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We will go with you.’ They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, ‘Children, do you have any fish?’ They answered him, ‘No.’ 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, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred metres off.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.’ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, ‘Come and have breakfast.’ Now none of the disciples dared ask him, ‘Who are you?’ They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

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 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 grieved because he said to him the 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. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.’ (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, ‘Follow me.’

Feast Days this week

Monday 5th May: Bl Edmund Rice (Ireland)

Tuesday 6th May: St Dominic Savio

Saturday 10th May: St John of Avila, St Comgall (Ireland)

Do you really love me?

The meeting with Jesus beside the lakeshore can be seen as the story of Peter's repentance and restoration. Others prefer to see it as his Confession, or declaration of faith. His repeated answer "Yes, Lord!" is surely a declaration of love and loyalty. It is not so easy to see how it can be a confession of guilt. But it does correspond to Peter's threefold denial of Jesus.

*There are interesting uses of the word "love" in this text. In English, when Jesus asks "Do you love me?" and Peter answers, "Yes, I love you," it makes good sense. But in the Greek original of the New Testament, what Peter replies does not respond exactly to the question Jesus asked. Greek has several words to express various levels of affection. In his book *The Four Loves*, the Belfast-born author C.S. Lewis described them as follows: There is *Storgé* (affection) the quiet liking you might feel for a cheerful neighbour whom you meet from time to time. Then there is *eros*, a sensual or erotic love, the love that unites a couple and often leads to marriage. Another term is *Philia*, or friendship, a trusting companionship with people with whom we share some real interest. Finally there is *Agapé*, which means generous, self-giving love, which we value even when there is nothing tangible to be gained.*

*Back to our gospel story. Jesus asks Peter, "Agapas me, Do you have agapé for me?" meaning "Do you love me enough to risk everything for me." Peter has not lived up to this kind of love. He had disowned Jesus in order to save his own skin. So what can he say? He answers, "Philo se. Yes, Lord, I love you as a friend." He was saying, "Yes, I admire you... but I was unable to risk my life for you." Jesus asks him a second time "Agapas me?" and again Peter answers at the level of friendship (*philia*). Finally, unwilling to embarrass him further, Jesus asks him "Are you really my friend?" (*phileis me?*) And Peter answers "Lord, you know everything; you know that I am your friend." (σὺ γινώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε.) Jesus accepts Peter just as he is; even friendship (*philia*) is good enough, for now. Fullness of *agapé* would come later, when Peter was put to death for the faith.*

In that meeting beside the lake, Peter was not the boastful man who thought he was better than the other disciples but a wiser, humbler heart that would not claim more than he can deliver. Peter's confession is like that of the father of the possessed boy who said to Jesus, "I believe; help my unbelief!" Implicitly, what Peter said was, "I love you, Lord; help my lack of love."

In the hymn: The Love of my Lord Is the Essence we profess in church our love for God. Peter's meeting with the risen Christ reminds us that professions of love tell only side of the truth. In reality, our love is hardly ever unconditional, and we often back away when faced with danger. Like Peter, we need to bring our failures to God for healing. We can join Peter today when he declares: "I love you, Lord; help my lack of love." associationofcatholicpriests.ie

Human Work

Especially on St Joseph the Worker — 1 May

Background

The commemoration of St Joseph the Worker on 1 May was instituted by Pius XII in 1955. It proposes the example and intercession of Joseph as worker and provider.

Prayer

*God our Father,
creator and ruler of the universe,
in every age you call men
and women
to develop and use their gifts
for the good of others.
With St Joseph as our example
and guide,
help us to do the work
you have asked
and come to the rewards
you have promised.
Roman Missal (adapted)*