

24. April 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
“The Apparition of Jesus at the Sea of Tiberias”

Jn 20:30-31; 21:1-14

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tibe'ri-as; and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathan'a-el of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zeb'edee, 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 beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Children, have you 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, for the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea. But 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 yards off.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying 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, a 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.

The Lord performed many signs and miracles to demonstrate God's nearness and love to people, and to awaken their faith. It is indeed faith in the Son of God that is able to

save people and align their lives with God's holy will. As today's opening verses make clear, these signs were performed so *"that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."*

Today, even in ecclesiastical circles, it can happen that faith in Jesus Christ is sometimes not considered necessary for salvation, with other religions being presented as if they are on the same level as Christianity. If they are spoken of as parallel paths leading to God, it is not realised that faith in Jesus Christ is not a private matter that we can change at will. Rather, it is God's great gift to all humanity. For those who have found it, it entails a commitment to show the 'water of life' to those who thirst for it, and to awaken this thirst in those who do not yet have it, through the witness of a life of holiness. Signs serve this task. Not all of them are recorded in this book, but the witnessed signs are sufficient to reinforce and accredit the proclamation of the Gospel.

In today's passage, the Lord appears to His disciples once again. This time, He meets them in a context with which they are very familiar, as they were fishermen. While accompanying the Lord in proclaiming the Kingdom of God, they lived with Him day and night and often ate with Him.

While He had revealed Himself to Mary Magdalene by pronouncing her name so that she would recognise Him by His voice, which was so familiar to her, He made Himself known to His disciples by showing them His wounds. He even allowed the unbelieving Thomas to touch them in order to draw him to Himself. In today's passage, the risen Lord wanted them to understand that, by His word, they would become fruitful in His kingdom. In fact, He had already sent them, had breathed on them the Holy Spirit and was now continuing to instruct them.

All night, the disciples had struggled in vain. It was only through the word of the Lord, who was standing by the lake but whom they did not recognise at first, that they managed to catch a plentiful haul of fish, and yet the net did not tear.

This foreshadows the future fruitfulness of the Church, which was entrusted by the Risen One with the task of spreading the Gospel to all peoples. The net of love that the Church is called to cast will reach many people, and entire nations will enter her fold. It will not break because it has been cast at God's command; He wants to lead all people to Himself and give them a home in His Church.

At that time, the disciples did not yet grasp the magnitude of the work to which they were called. However, their eyes will gradually open and they will recognise the Risen One more quickly, allowing this new reality to sink in.

In today's passage, it was again the beloved disciple who first recognised the Lord, who was on the shore and had prepared something to eat on the coals. Love recognises first, and it is also the key concept for understanding the entire work of God and participating in it. We will see this more clearly in the next meditation, when the Risen Lord commissions Peter to preside over the Church.