

## Third Sunday of Easter, Year C, Catechist

Submitted by lectionaryadmin on Mon, 03/04/2013 - 19:00

### **Catechist Background and Preparation**

To prepare for the session, read all the readings.

Acts 5:27-32, 40-41

Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading that appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

## **The Word In Liturgy**

The readings of the Third Sunday of Easter in all three years of the lectionary cycle tell of a meal with the resurrected Jesus. In each year, specific themes within this general subject come to light. In today's gospel reading, for example, the breakfast that the disciples share with Jesus on the beach is prefaced by a story that is symbolic of the call to discipleship (the great catch of fish), and it is followed by a dialogue between Jesus and Peter concerning love and mission. Both illuminate the relationship of Eucharist to mission.

The passage begins with failure. The disciples have spent the night fishing and caught nothing. When Jesus appears and tells them where to cast their nets however, they haul 153 fish into their boat (the reason for this precise number is lost to us, except that it is obviously large). When one recalls that at the beginning of John's gospel the call of the disciples to share in the mission of Jesus was described in terms of catching fish, the symbolism of this event at the end of John's gospel becomes clear. In the presence and under the direction of the risen Lord, the disciples can undertake their evangelizing mission with new and unparalleled fruitfulness.

The meal that follows literally brings the fruit of the combined work of Jesus and his followers to the table ("Bring some of the fish you have caught . . . Come and have your meal."), and in a gesture of humble service, Jesus prepares the meal himself. Though the story tells that the Beloved Disciple, and through him Peter, recognized Jesus while they were still at sea, in the meal itself this knowledge is revealed to be general. ("No one dared to question him, for they knew it was the Lord.")

The meal finished, the narrative goes on to speak about feeding in yet another way. In response to Peter's three-fold profession of love for him, Jesus asks this disciple who three times betrayed him during his passion to "Feed my sheep." Again the story issues an imperative to mission—this time in the form of a pastoral ministry modeled on Jesus' own role as shepherd. Finally, Peter is warned

that as a faithful servant he will experience suffering, which the Johannine editor tells us will amount to martyrdom. When Peter is called to follow the Master, he is being asked to give his very life.

## Catholic Doctrine

### Eucharist and Mission

Discipleship does not turn in upon itself. By its nature, Christian discipleship is a following of Jesus who calls us to join him in carrying the cross and witnessing to the good news of the kingdom of God. Discipleship thus leads to the Eucharist, the meal of the sacrifice of Jesus and, in turn, this meal leads us to evangelize.

Catholics believe that the Eucharist is the foundational sacrament which makes us who we are as a Church. Those who join together in the celebration of the Eucharist not only offer to God the sacrifice of Christ but offer themselves and their lives in union with the Savior. Indeed, it is our Catholic understanding of this sacrament that it brings to perfection all the gifts offered and all the sacrifices made by us for the kingdom of God.

The meal of the Lord also strengthens believers for the mission of Christ. It increases our love for the poor and unfortunate, those whom we are called to serve. It renews within us our baptismal inheritance. The very name we Catholics give to the whole celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy, the Mass (derived from the Latin, *missa*, "be sent"), indicates the thrust of this sacrifice. Nourished by it we go forth to spend our lives in service as bread broken and a cup poured out for the life of the world.

As followers of Jesus we are led to the meal which is the source and summit of our Christian life. And in partaking of this sacrifice by which God gives himself to us, we are enjoined to do the same for our brothers and sisters in need, to "go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

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