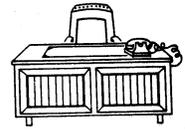


3rd Sunday of Easter

May 5, 2019



From the Desk of
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

Sunday Reflection:

In this Sunday's gospel, we continue to read about the resurrection appearances of Jesus. These appearances underscore the reality of the resurrection and strengthen the faith of believers. With each appearance, the number of witnesses increased, making it more difficult for the opposition to refute. If the empty tomb were all we had, it would have been quite a challenge convincing even some of the disciples that he had risen.

Last week, Thomas stated flatly that he would not believe the story about the risen Christ's appearance unless he saw the nail marks and put his finger into the nail marks and his hand into his wounded side. Obviously, the story of an empty tomb alone would not have convinced people like Thomas, let alone the Pharisees and Sadducees. The opposition was already fabricating stories that the disciples came at night, took the body, and made up stories of his resurrection.

Today's appearance would make it the second time Thomas was encountering the risen Lord following his skeptical utterances. This episode of the resurrection encounter took place at the Sea of Tiberias. Simon Peter was with six other disciples when, suddenly, he wanted to go fishing. He may have been tired of sitting around waiting for what comes next. Being out of work could give rise to boredom. Going back to their former way of life as fishermen seemed like a great way to break the boredom. The other disciples also decided to go along. Moreover, going fishing is a beautiful metaphor for encouraging vocations and for evangelization. Both ministries are not the sole responsibility of priests and bishops, but of the whole Church.

However, fishing together is no guarantee of success either. Peter and his companions fished all night and caught nothing. Jesus appeared to them at dawn without being recognized and suggests that they cast the net on the other side of the boat. They were amazed at the enormous catch of one hundred and fifty three fish. The lesson here is that skills and perseverance do not guarantee a good catch. Peter and his companions had all two and were still unsuccessful. The presence of the risen Lord made all the difference. Similarly, the presence of God in every human endeavor makes all the difference.

Like Peter and the other disciples, we have the tendency to keep fishing on the same side of the boat and getting frustrated at the pitiful result. Fishing on one side of the boat may start out well, but is soon exhausted. Trying the other side of the boat makes a great deal of sense. Unfortunately, our environment, biases and idiosyncrasies often limit our desire to try the other side of the boat. However, the presence of God enables us to overcome these limitations and guarantees success.

It is fascinating to know that Jesus cared whether the disciples had breakfast. By the time they got on shore, he already had a charcoal fire going and prepared breakfast for them. Though they suspected it was the Lord, any further doubts dissipated when he took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. It was reminiscent of what happened at the Last Supper. Hence, as we continue our Easter celebrations, let us keep our eyes open to recognizing and celebrating the presence of the risen Lord among us.

Have a great week!

Fr. Romanus