



Christian Education

A series of Sermons and Occasional Papers
From the clergy and members
of Holy Trinity Church
Forbes Park, Makati

Date: 25 April 2004 (7:30 service)
Title: **"Back to Fishing."**
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Readings for this Sunday:

First Reading Acts 9:1-19
Second Reading Revelation 5:6-14
Gospel John 21:1-14

It is significant that when the disciples were feeling the most disoriented and confused about what happened that Easter morning, they went back to fishing. Somehow, that seems to have been the "default key" for some of them- a familiar activity that didn't take a lot of thought, but did take a lot of hard physical labor: just the thing to take their minds off what they had been through.

It is a temptation for us, too, that after the first couple Sundays of the Easter season, we start to get uncomfortable with all this talk about the empty tomb and the appearances of Christ and we want to get back to everyday kinds of activities, even in church.

But there is something wild and wonderful about Easter: something that won't let itself be tied down by routine and the everyday. No matter how staid and formal our worship may be perceived, or however unchanging we may imagine our traditions and our faith are, there is something about Easter that challenges us to "think outside the box": to imagine that which is "just beyond" the patterns and boredom of our lives.

Yet, there is something to Easter that remains familiar and comforting...in a bizarre sort of way. Christ's appearance on the shore of the lake was just as unsettling as his other visits, but it was *still Jesus*: just like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and just like Mary Magdalene herself when she came on Easter morning to the tomb, it takes a while to recognize the Lord in his new form- it takes an exchange of words, the breaking of bread, the speaking of a name.

In today's Gospel reading, it takes Jesus' invitation to try casting nets in a different location: something that harked back to their first meeting with Christ by the shores of that very same lake- perhaps at that very same spot. It's a reminder of the fact that they're not supposed to be fishers of fish anymore, but of men. But there is still confusion: the text tells us that "none of the disciples was bold enough to ask, 'Who are you?'" And yet, it adds, "they all knew" it was him. It is then that "the penny drops," (as the English say); then there is understanding that the Risen Lord is with them again.

When Jesus appears to us in the forms he chooses in this 21st century, it can be just as disconcerting for us as it was for the disciples since it takes our brains, our hearts, and the eyes of our faith to discern who he is and what he wants us to do. But he is always there, someplace, telling me to throw out my net again in a new, unexpected place: there at the center of human contact, in my work, in my play, in my family, in my friends. He is there in my faith, however weak and cowardly it might be. He is there for all of those who search for truth, who love and forgive, and who struggle for a better and more just world.

It still takes as much courage to follow him as it ever did: to keep the excitement and the surprise of the Resurrection alive in how we live. Do we have what it takes to put our nets out someplace new? Are we excited enough to jump out of our safe little boat and swim to Jesus? I just wonder. But I am determined not to let the Easter season go by without reveling in the surprises and the revelations that the Risen Christ has in store for us all.