Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent” (John 6:29).

Acts 6:8-15; *Jn 6:22-29*

It may seem odd to move quickly from the Easter appearance stories back into the middle of the Gospels. What we are witnessing is that the early church found the risen Jesus by remembering his life with them. After his death in Jerusalem, the disciples returned to Galilee and there found him mysteriously present in many of the same experiences they had had with him during his earthly life, only now transformed into the risen Christ.

Sunday’s story of the stranger on the shore of the Sea of Galilee repeats details of earlier experiences in which the disciples were first called or when they caught a huge swarm of fish by letting their nets down on the other side of the boat. By returning to their former lives as fishermen, Peter and the others found Jesus again and began to understand the meaning of their call and the great catch.

In today’s first reading from Acts, Stephen is glorified as the first martyr as he imitates the death of Jesus. Saul sees his death and will soon encounter the risen Jesus himself on the road to Damascus and from there begin his mission to extend the Gospel into the Gentile world. In another story from Acts, Peter emerges from prison as Jesus had escaped the tomb. Disciples did what Jesus had done because they now shared his risen life and power.

Remembering Jesus in the breaking of the bread and sharing of the Scriptures evokes his presence in the faith community. He is alive, beyond time and space now as God’s invitation to become new beings in the new creation.

Today’s Gospel returns us to the time Jesus fed the crowds in the wilderness, then met his own disciples struggling in the boat during the storm at sea as he walked on water back to Capernaum. This story again evokes the risen Jesus, who tells the crowds that hungering for bread is only a sign of a deeper hunger that only faith can satisfy. Believing in him begins the work of God in our lives.

We are part of this post-resurrection community, invited to find Jesus present in the world, active along the threshold of time as we seek to imitate him, coming out of our locked rooms and fearful hesitation to trust the graces that pour into every situation where compassion is needed, in every act of loving service and selfless giving. “Where are you?” we ask, and Jesus answers, “Come and see.” If we move toward his voice, we move from darkness into light, from blindness into sight, from doubt into faith.

Easter life is always just ahead, calling us forward little by little, step by step, out of our self-referential hesitation and fear into the Beloved Community. Jesus made this possible for us by his death and resurrection. This is our risen life, here and now, in this world with its challenges and burdens, but now embraced with joy and confidence that because he is with us, nothing can stop the advance of grace that creates the future Jesus promised.

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