Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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April 13, 2023
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“Come, have breakfast” (John 21:12).

Easter Friday

Acts 4:1-12; *Jn 21:1-14*

The story of the risen Jesus appearing on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias is really a story about Peter, who needed to be rehabilitated after his triple denial of Jesus on Good Friday. It appears in the “epilogue” of John’s Gospel—a later addition -- and echoes back to an earlier story in Luke 5:1-11, the first miraculous catch of fish when Jesus called Peter to be one of his disciples.

Like the first story, the seven apostles, who have returned to Galilee after the disastrous events at Passover in Jerusalem, fish all night but catch nothing. At dawn, a stranger stands on the shore shouting to them, “Children, have you caught anything?” No, they have toiled all night but caught nothing.

At this point we are right to sense that every detail in this account will have double significance, from the darkness-to-dawn motif to Peter’s rebaptism as he jumps into the lake to rush to shore, or the precise number of fish caught (153).

The stranger on the shore, like the stranger on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, will be gradually revealed in the course of a meal (breakfast), and he will engage Peter in a heart-wrenching journey from betrayal to forgiveness and restoration to leadership. His triple profession of love will elicit Jesus’ command, “Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.”

If there is a founding moment in the Scriptures for the church, and a special role for Peter, it might be here. It is even more important than the scene in Matthew 16 where Jesus calls Peter the rock on which the church will be built. It is in this climactic scene in John 21 that the role of leadership is really defined. Peter will lead the church of mercy because he is the one who needed mercy the most. Peter will feed the flock as shepherd not for motives of power or position but because he loves Jesus with all his heart.

This is the church and the Gospel we see in Pope Francis, and it is the only one, holy, catholic and apostolic church there is.