

Good morning. How is your Easter going? Do you find it difficult, sometimes, to keep putting forward your Resurrection face? Are you back to the daily grind, wondering what all the fuss was about, the celebration of Easter Day a distant memory? The fickle sunshine hasn't helped. Jack and I were in NH yesterday and drove through what I hope was the last snow of the season! What did happen to Easter?

Well, it seems evident this morning that the disciples are in the same boat. No pun intended – or maybe it was. Anyway, Jesus' disciples seem to need to get back to their daily grind. They've gone back to Galilee, where Jesus found most of them in the first place, at the Sea of Galilee, aka Tiberias, aka Gennesaret. How one lake got so many names I do not know. Anyway, it's the same familiar lake at which Jesus called Peter and Andrew and James and John and some others of the 12.

Now there are just 7 of them. Perhaps a sign of dwindling attendance even among the disciples! Perhaps they experienced the same phenomenon as we do when, after the celebration of Easter, there's a let down. Only 7 of the 12.

And Peter says, "I'm tired, I'm confused. So much has happened in just a few weeks – declaring Jesus king as he entered Jerusalem – waving palms, having him serve us supper and wash our feet, then seeing him arrested and tried and then crucified. And after that, did he really appear to us? I don't understand all that's been happening," says Peter. "I'm going fishing." That Peter has always understood. Or at least he thought he did.

There's something wonderfully familiar for them about climbing into the boat and doing what Peter and most of the others know how to do in their sleep. It's comforting, often, restoring even, to go back to a routine we know and understand.

When Jesus first found them there fishing, he told them their fishing would change. By following him they would be fishing for people. But at the moment they're just not ready for change. Like us, they've lost the glow of what seems to have happened, never fully understanding resurrection anyway, and they've gravitated back to what's familiar.

And then, there he is on the shore calling out to them, "Got fish?" I wonder if they considered claiming they had caught a great many fish and thrown them back, or telling him about "the one that got away." At any rate they do not tell him any fish stories.

They tell him simply, "No." We've got nothing. And he performs a miracle. "Cast your nets on the other side. Try something different." And the result is extraordinary.

Try something different.

I can't resist a fishing story. An Episcopal Church in a small town in the northeast kingdom of Vermont called a new rector. Now, the long-time parishioners of that church were naturally suspicious of anyone from outside their town anyway, but this time the vestry called a woman as rector, so they determined they would really have to watch her carefully.

Some of the men decided they would invite her to go fishing with them to see what she was made of. She agreed to go. They met very early in the morning and set out in the senior warden's boat. But they hadn't gone far out into the lake when one of the men noticed that his fishing pole had been left behind on the dock.

"Oh, don't worry," said the new rector. "I'll get it for you." She stepped out of the boat and walked across the water toward the dock. "See? What did I tell you?" cried one of the men. "She can't even swim."

Well, calling female clergy is something you have done for some time. That's nothing new. I wonder what Jesus might have in mind for us now when he says, "cast your net to the other side of the boat."

Jesus is able to transform our everyday life. All the time. He is present with us to nourish us, to feed us, always. What we need to do is recognize that it's him there on the beach, calling to us, showing us how to bring in an abundance, cooking breakfast for us.

The disciples, in another post-resurrection story – the one on the Road to Emmaus – did not recognize him until they were at table with him. They knew him in the breaking of the bread.

This rather sweet story of him fixing breakfast calls to mind the feeding of the 5000, around this same lake, the multiplication of the bread and the fish, like the fish now in the net, a sign that abundance surrounds him and that he is so eager to share it with us.

"Come and have breakfast," he says. And he serves them just as he served the bread and wine which are his body and blood.

Jesus is our companion on the way. Do you know what the word "companion" means? *Pane* is "bread", *com* is "with." *Com-pane* - "with bread." Our fellowship together, breaking bread, is so much a part of our journey together, companions all, and it begins with Jesus, who is both the bread and the host, and our companion. Always.

Jesus is present not only in our joys but also in our sorrows. Jesus is present with the victims of violence and natural disasters and all manner of misfortune. He will not leave us in despair. In the deepest sorrows Jesus can transform our lives.

If you could do one thing as a follower of Jesus Christ, one thing to truly help the world, one thing that qualifies as an answer to Jesus' command to "feed my sheep," let it be this:

When you hear someone in distress ask “why did God do this to me?” Say, “No.” Say, “God did not bring you trouble. God weeps with you. God loves you and wants only the best for you. God will transform your life through this bad time if you let it happen.”

Say that. It could be the single greatest service to humankind done by followers of Jesus, to let others know that God does not single out some people for grief and distress, but rather that God waits for all of us, longs to fill all of us with his goodness, desires that we all have new life.

I believe this is what resurrection means to our everyday life. It means endless possibility in Christ.

This gospel of John is such a wonderful book. The first story in it is one of abundance. It’s when Jesus turns water into wine at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. And it is a very great quantity of wine that he produces, far more than the people could consume.

Now Jesus, crucified and risen again, causes the confused and weary disciples to bring in a great abundance of fish and through that to recognize him.

Thanks be to God.

Soli Deo Gloria