

Quotations

1

Resurrection means that the worst thing is never the last thing.
Frederick Buechner, 1926–

2

Without a doubt, at the centre of the New Testament there stands the Cross, which receives its interpretation from the Resurrection.
Hans Urs von Balthasar, 1905–1988

Related topics

For further study:

Death/resurrection/paschal mystery; mystery of the church; cross; eucharist (symbols of water, oil, bread, wine); baptism; confirmation; Christian witness

Closing Prayer

God of life,
in your risen Son
you reveal your abiding presence among us
and summon those reborn in baptism
to lives of worship and service.

Fill this assembly with reverence
as we come before you in prayer.
Grant us courage and zeal
in bearing witness before the world
to your Son, Jesus Christ, the first-born from the dead,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. Amen.

Opening prayers · Easter 3C³

CPL • LBC Year C Easter 3.odt • 2022-04-29

³ *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.

4

The Third Sunday of Easter

Principal Service readings

Acts 9.1-6, [7-20] ¹	Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus
Psalm 30	A song of praise for new life from God
Revelation 5.11-14	John hears the praise of myriads in heaven
John 21.1-19	Post-resurrection appearance of Jesus at the Sea of Tiberias

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Jesus appears to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias

¹Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ²Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' ⁶He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. ⁸But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

⁹When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' ¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a

¹ The Acts reading must be used as either the first or second reading.

hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹³Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' ¹⁶A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' ¹⁷He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. ¹⁸Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' ¹⁹He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God. After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

John 21.1-19 NRSV²

Comments and Questions

This final chapter of John is widely considered to be an addition to the gospel that ended at 20.31, which does read like a conclusion. Notable features are: (1) the vocabulary and expressions are markedly different from the rest of the gospel; (b) a concern for the community is shown far beyond that shown in 1.1–20.31; (c) the sequence of the story becomes confused. – why are the disciples returning from Jerusalem to Galilee to resume their former occupations? (d) there is an obtuseness among the disciples, who seem to have lost their joy, sense of mission, and gift of the Spirit (20.19-23); (e) the final words in 21.25 repeated, in a less theological and lesser reader-oriented way, the conclusion of 20.30.

In the first part of the chapter (21.1-14) Jesus mysteriously appears to the disciples, who have gone fishing. We are told right at the beginning (21.1), unusually for John, that Jesus is about to show himself to his disciples. The mention of the seven disciples 'gathered there' (21.2)

² *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

indicates the continuation of the new community of the cross (cf. 19.25-27).

How is it possible that the disciples, after their commissioning by Jesus (20.19-23), could so easily return to their everyday activity of fishing? There has been much speculation about this. Could it be something to do with the mental state of the disciples? Or is it about Peter's symbolic leadership of the disciples as 'fishers' of people? Have they abandoned their mission? Or are they simply disoriented? In the end we can see that their appearance at Galilee is simply the setting for the appearance of Jesus that follows. But it does indicate that John 21 was formed in the community independent of 20.1-31.

Jesus appears 'just as day was breaking' (21.4), a similar setting to the appearance to Mary Magdalene (20.1). John mentions that there are seven disciples gathered, including 'two others' (21.2). Could one of them be the 'Beloved Disciple', who is never named in the fourth gospel?

As with the appearance to Mary Magdalene (20.14), Jesus is unrecognised by the disciples (21.4). Jesus addresses them as 'children', indicating an intimate authority. Jesus shows his authority over the elements (21.6). In response to the miraculous catch the two disciples who were at the tomb take a prominent role (Peter and the Beloved Disciple). The Beloved Disciple recognises Jesus and Peter jumps into the sea (21.7).

The disciples are now invited to share a meal with Jesus. There is no commonly understood significance to the number of fish caught: 153. But perhaps the important point is that the net was not torn. It is stated that this is the third post-resurrection appearance of Jesus, but it is actually the fourth (cf. 20.11-18, 19-23, 26-29; 21.4-14).

Jesus asks Peter three times to commit himself to love Jesus more than he loves the other disciples. Clearly there is a reference to the three-fold denial of Jesus by Peter (cf. 18.15-18, 25-27). The denials must be overcome. Peter's embarrassed but honest responses lead to Jesus' acceptance of Peter's commitment to love and establishes a renewed relationship.