

Easter Octave Friday 2020
JN 21:1-19

After the unbelievable events of that first Holy Week in Jerusalem, the Apostles returned. They returned:

- ✓ to their former way of life,
- ✓ to their nets and fish,
- ✓ to their haunts and houses,
- ✓ and particularly to the Sea of Galilee, also known as Tiberias

that were so full of tender memories. For it was along those same shores of Tiberias that Our Blessed Lord called the Apostles to be fishers of men. It was in that region that Jesus performed His first miracle, changing water into wine. At His first miracle, there was no wine. At His last miracle, there was no fish. Both resulted in an overabundance; Cana had its six water jars filled the “best” wine, and Tiberias had its nets full of fish.

It must have been more difficult for the younger than the older, more difficult for John than for Peter, to return to their former way of life. John had:

- ✓ the distractions of his youth,
- ✓ his keen memory,
- ✓ his privileged moments

with Our Blessed Lord that the other apostles did not have.

- ✓ John was there when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead.
- ✓ John was there at the Transfiguration of Our Blessed Lord and he saw Jesus' face shine like the sun and His garments as white as light.
- ✓ At the Last Supper I would have traded places with no one but John. John was the beloved disciple, the one Jesus loved. While the other apostles sat around Jesus, John's place was to lean back against Jesus' chest. I cannot even begin to fathom the intimacy that was afforded John that First Holy Thursday night, literally within inches of His Most Sacred Heart!
- ✓ John was there when Jesus was arrested.
- ✓ After Jesus was arrested, it was John who did some quick talking to get Peter admitted to the courtyard of the high priest.
- ✓ It was John who stood at the foot of the cross and held Mary in his very arms.
- ✓ And it was John who arrived at the tomb first and saw and believed.

And yet now it was back to life as usual:

- ✓ nothing new,
- ✓ same old same old,

- ✓ day in and day out,
- ✓ empty cast after empty cast.

Except for John. Except for the Beloved Disciple. He believed. As he was preparing the nets and mending the boats and washing the fish, he had to be distracted:

- ✓ he'd look to the shores of Galilee and remember the crowds that used to come to Jesus there;
- ✓ he would imagine the lame, the blind, the deformed, the mute who used to come to Jesus there; and Jesus cured them.
- ✓ He'd look at the shore and remember Jesus sitting at that very place and feeding the four thousand with just five loaves and two fish.
- ✓ He reminisced how Jesus sat in the boat just off shore and taught the crowds at great length.
- ✓ He walked on these waters.

So as the other apostles settled for all that fishing entailed, John, young John's mind was filled with all these memories; he just wouldn't let them go. He couldn't let them go. Leaning on an oar, John kept looking up in disbelief that it was all over. Holding onto the net, he kept looking up with discontent. And looking up again, John saw Jesus! "Look, it is the Lord!" Good for you, John. You didn't give up. No wonder you were the

Beloved Disciple, John - good for you.

Peter had his memories too. Some were wholly his own:

- ✓ confessing Jesus as the Messiah, the son of the living God;
- ✓ receiving the keys of the kingdom

Other memories he shared with John:

- ✓ the raising of the daughter of Jairus;
- ✓ the Transfiguration;
- ✓ the Last Supper;
- ✓ the courtyard . . . yes, the infamous courtyard

As John held his fishing nets, his mind was filled with all:

- ✓ the fine memories,
- ✓ the healings,
- ✓ the miracles,
- ✓ the teaching,
- ✓ leaning on his chest,
- ✓ believing at the tomb.

But Peter held his net too, and his mind was filled with memories of the courtyard, that night, that fateful night, and his own words would haunt him and eat him alive - "Damn you woman I do not know the man." And Jesus turned and looked at me and all I could do was cry. Everyone in that courtyard

knew exactly who I was . . . Lord, I would give anything to live that night in the courtyard over again.

It was at that moment John saw Jesus on the beach. "Look, it is the Lord." And Peter, who had beat himself up because of what he said, not once, not twice, but three times, jumped into the water for the chance to take back what he said, to live that fateful night over. Peter got to the shore, and Our Blessed Lord had a charcoal fire burning. A charcoal fire. The Gospel of John is very specific. It was a charcoal fire by which Peter was warming himself before he denied Our Blessed Lord. And it was a charcoal fire on that beach that took Peter right back to that courtyard memory that that fire burned into his mind and seared his heart.

Our Blessed Lord provided the opportunity for Peter to make amends. "Peter, do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

"Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you."

Good for your Peter. You messed up in that courtyard big time. Agreed you could never return to that courtyard to take back those words of denial, but there was no time like the present

and you jumped at the chance. There was no time like the present to make amends with our Blessed Lord. Good for you, Peter.

Anyone in this Church who would like the opportunity to jump at the chance to make amends? Anyone mess up at work, in the lunchroom, in your marriage, as a parent, as a son or as a girlfriend . . . any disciples here who messed up with Our Blessed Lord? Anybody ever take the words right out of Peter's mouth, "Damn you woman, I do not know the man!" So what are you waiting for?

It's been a month today since the social distancing began for us. And during this month, you and I have had a lot of down time, a lot of down time to sit and think and put things in perspective, regarding who and what we've taken for granted. I know I have. I've said a few times, every time my phone goes off with another appointment or ministry that is now either postponed or cancelled, I realize how much I've taken for granted. I feel like I'm sitting in the boat right along Peter and John, holding the empty nets, thinking about all that I've taken for granted.

If you're waiting for an appearance of the risen Lord on the

shores of the nearest lake, it will never happen. If you're waiting for an opportunity to relive that fateful night "in the courtyard, or in the kitchen, or in school," it will never happen. What's past is past. Peter never got back into that courtyard and relived that night, but he jumped at the present moment and took full advantage of his chance on the beach. So let's take advantage of the silence of this pandemic to thank Our Blessed Lord for all that He has given us that we took o so much for granted.

Take it from Peter, when it comes to making amends, there is no time like the present.