

## BREAKFAST ON THE BEACH WITH JESUS: 3RD SUNDAY EASTER C

There's this young girl, who said to her father one day: *'Dad, I would like to play the harp.'* Her father was sympathetic, but tried to discourage his daughter from pursuing that dream. *'They cost a lot of money,'* he said, *'and your Mum is so sick she's been in and out of hospital.'* *'But I'll work my holidays and Saturdays,'* his daughter answered. *'You're only 14. It's impossible,'* said her Dad. But with dogged determination she stuck to her plans until her mother's illness meant she could work no longer. She had \$1200, but where do you find a harp for \$1200? But then the seemingly impossible happened. A harp teacher told her of an older woman who had a very good harp but no longer played it. The teacher said she would ask on the girl's behalf. That very day the lady with the harp happened to be home for the first time in three years. *'Yes,'* she said: *'I still have the harp and I will sell it to the young girl for what she can afford.'* Not only that! She offered to teach her how to play it and without the usual fees. Soon the young girl's family home was echoing day after day to the beautiful sounds of the harp. Sometimes, then, even the most impossible dreams come true!

We human beings are full of purpose and plans, always setting goals and objectives and targets. Our hope of achieving them leads us to make far-reaching changes. This is illustrated by our decision, renewed on Easter Sunday, to reject sin and evil and to follow Jesus in a life of unselfish love.

Experience suggests that involvement in the life of the Church and its goals is mostly an experience of fulfilment and hope. Experience also suggests that this is not always the case. For sometimes we also have frustrations and failures, disappointments and discouragement. At these times we come face to face with our own frailty and inadequacy as well as that of others.

It will be helpful and encouraging for continuing our commitment, to reflect on the situation of the disciples in today's gospel. Seven of them are mentioned. To their credit they had previously responded to the invitation of Jesus to be his companions, to share his mission of making the kingdom of God happen on earth, and to share his activities of befriending, teaching, helping and healing for the kingdom. In their shared life and work they have known times of elation, excitement and achievement. But right now it has all come to an abrupt end. For just a few days previously, Jesus their beloved Leader was arrested, tried, sentenced, and killed.

Right now they are grief-stricken. They are feeling that without his presence, his inspiration and guidance, his support and encouragement, they simply cannot go on. So, in this gospel scene we find them many miles from Jerusalem, the place of the crucifixion and the main scene of their failures and disappointments. They have returned to Galilee and to their former occupations. In a sense they have left the Church.

It's within this situation of disappointed hopes and broken dreams that Jesus comes back into their lives. Not simply as Jesus of Nazareth this time, but as the Risen Lord, powerful and empowering.

Their human weakness is dramatized in their failure to catch any fish. But the encouragement and assistance of Jesus turns their failure to success. We're told that they haul *'the net to the shore, full of big fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them'*. This represents Jesus re-commissioning them to their previous calling to be *'fishers of people'*. It also symbolizes Jesus working with them to ensure the success of their work. It also means Jesus offering them his forgiveness and reconciliation for abandoning him and his mission.

We note also the significance of the breakfast on the beach which Jesus provides. This may be seen as *'a communion breakfast'*, in which he gives himself as nourishment, sustenance and support to his friends.

The story of the first disciples and their encounter with the Risen One is our story too. We can easily identify with their weaknesses and failures, their despondency and discouragement, their disillusionment and despair. We too can be feeling, at least sometimes: *'I didn't think that my life would work out like this. I thought people would be more appreciative, and be more ready to make allowances. I expected more fulfilment and more meaning than what I'm getting. Is that all there is? I wonder just how long I can keep belonging to Jesus and keep striving to follow him in this community.'*

When we are thinking and feeling like that, clearly we have lost heart. On the other hand, it's clearly a signal *'to let go and let God'*, as the saying goes. Thinking and feeling like that is a signal to us to let the Risen Jesus come to us as he came to his first friends, and to give us that new heart, that new Spirit, that new meaning and purpose, which we need so much.

In our Holy Communion with our Risen Leader today, let's share with him what we think and feel about all that!

[bgleesoncp@gmail.com](mailto:bgleesoncp@gmail.com)