

“CHANGING MINDS....CHANGING HEARTS”

Easter to Pentecost, 2019

Small Group Gathering for Week No 2

Gospel: 3rd Sunday of Easter; John 21:1-19

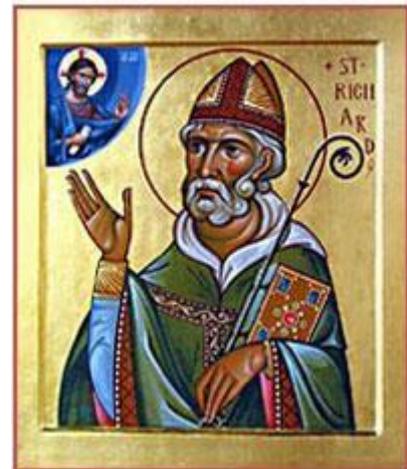
Gather:

A candle is lit to signal the start of our gathering. The moving light of the candle is a sign of the living Christ, the Light of the World, with us.

A short time of silence.

Prayer (together):

*Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ
For all the benefits you have given me,
For all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother,
May I know you more clearly,
Love you more dearly,
Follow you more nearly.
Amen*



St Richard of Chichester
(English Bishop, c 1197-1253)

My Present Life:

Think of your life at present; spend at least five minutes in silence considering the following questions.

Do you have responsibility for the well-being of another person/s? Or other responsibilities?

When are these responsibilities joys for you?

When are these responsibilities burdens for you?

A Faith Angle:

Last Sunday, the Church throughout the world encountered Christ in the following part of the Gospel. Take your time to read it through slowly in silence or listen as a member of your group reads it aloud.

John 21: 1-19

²¹ After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ² Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³ Simon 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.

⁴ Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ He 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. ⁷ That 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 sea. ⁸ But 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.

⁹ When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus 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. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵ When 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." ¹⁶ A 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." ¹⁷ He 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. ¹⁸ Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to 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." ¹⁹ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

(Bible Gateway, New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition,
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+21%3A1-19&version=NRSVCE> , retrieved 12/03/19)

Some Other Thoughts:

This is a long reading. It forms the bulk of a kind of appendix to John's gospel; the conclusion of the gospel seems to have been announced at the end of John 20 but this final appearance story follows.

Peter had slipped out of John's gospel at the point where he denied that he knew Jesus (John 18:27). The unnamed "Beloved Disciple" had been prominent in the passion and resurrection stories. Even when that disciple and Peter had run to and seen the empty tomb on Easter morning, it was the Beloved Disciple who, we are told, believed; nothing is said about Peter's state of mind or heart. It is interesting, however, that the faster-running Beloved Disciple had waited outside the tomb to allow Peter to go in first. Perhaps this sign of respect indicates Peter has some leadership role in the group.

Peter had denied that he knew Jesus three times. He had done it in response to three direct, simple questions, asked in front of a small group of on-lookers gathered near a charcoal fire, because "it was cold" (John 18:18).

Now Peter returns to centre stage as Jesus asks him three times, "Do you love me?", a direct, simple question. The questioning takes place in front of a small group of on-lookers gathered near a charcoal fire. This one had had "fish cooking on it" (John 21:9). Peter's response is one of affirmation of his love for and faith in Jesus.

This love and faith, this re-establishment of his relationship with Jesus, will bring true joy and peace for Peter but not earthly comfort; they will mean that he will have to shoulder great responsibility and suffer much.

In the ordinary settings of our lives, we too can be asked a question that might mean we have to witness to our attachment to Jesus in front of a group of people. It may even come near a charcoal fire; we've all been to barbecues, haven't we?



Sharing:

If you wish, only if you wish, share one or two (no more than two) of your thoughts or insights about the passage. Please speak for no more than twenty seconds at a time. This sharing is not a time for comparing the values of people's comments; it is certainly not a time for debate.

Go back to the gospel reading for another period of silent engagement.

My Future Life:

Turning to the future, and in the light of your prayer reflection and discussion, spend at least five minutes considering the following questions.

Are there some relatively unimportant things that take up too much of my/our time, energy or money?

What can I/we do to put first things first?

Might these questions be applied to our local Church community?

Go:

This has been a special time. It will have been worthwhile if it leads us to live, even in a little way, as better people. We ask God's blessing on us and those everyday lives of ours as we return to them.

Let us pray...

We thank you and bless you, Lord our God.

We find you in the relationships that make up our lives.

Help us to be true to you in the way we live those relationships.

Bless us with your love and strength

so that those who depend on us in any way

may grow in that same love and strength.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

