

May 4, 2025

From the Desk of Fr. Jerry

In the gospel of Luke, the miracle of the abundant catch of fish happens before the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the gospel of John that miracle happens after the resurrection of Jesus. Did Jesus perform the miracle of the fish multiple times? He could have. But it is more likely that each gospel writer used the tradition of the “abundant catch” to suit their own purpose.

Scripture scholars distinguish between Jesus’ pre and post resurrection appearances. In the former, Jesus was physically present with the Apostles as I am present to you and you to each other. A consistent feature of resurrection stories is that Jesus was very different after his resurrection. He appeared in a transformed way and was initially unrecognizable.

Although others are mentioned, the primary characters in today’s gospel are “the disciple Jesus loved” and Peter. “The disciple Jesus loved” is identified as the first to recognize Jesus. He also arrived first at the tomb on Easter morning. Then he was said to be the first to believe. In the Easter morning story of a race to the tomb, the beloved disciple runs faster and outpaces Peter. A beloved disciple is one who lives in a constant awareness of being loved by God.

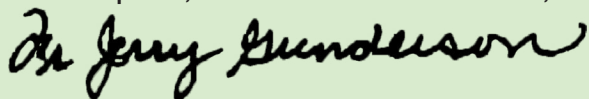
Peter is the second primary character in today’s gospel. The relationship between Jesus and Peter has been developed throughout the gospel. Peter has repeatedly faltered. When Jesus talks openly about his impending demise, Peter strongly protests. Jesus says to Peter, “Get behind me Satan.” At the Last Supper foot washing Peter says, “Lord, you will never wash my feet.” Again, Jesus reprimands Peter.

Peter’s recognition of the presence of Jesus after the resurrection is thwarted. His threefold past denial in the courtyard of the high priest stands in the way. Peter’s threefold denial took place as he warmed himself against a cold night by a charcoal fire.

After the resurrection, a charcoal fire is set to prepare breakfast for Peter and the disciples. It is the dawn of a new day after the resurrection. Jesus says, “Let me make you some breakfast,” and Peter does not protest. A shift in Peter has begun. Peter is coming to recognize who feeds him. He has become willing to receive an act of love.

The climax of the changed relationship is the conversation between Jesus and Peter. Jesus evokes a threefold expression of Peter’s love. Three times Peter is entrusted with a mission to feed lambs and sheep. He accepted the challenge and gave his life for the sake of the gospel.

As we continue to prayerfully remember and give thanks for the example of loving service of Pope Francis, we must also ask God to provide a new shepherd who will love and care for the Church. The Cardinal electors will soon enter the Conclave that will select a successor to Peter. Let’s pray that the College of Cardinals may be open in heart and mind to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their discernment. Let’s join them in praying for the Church at this important time of transition. Let’s pray that the newly elected Pope will be a champion for the poor, a reconciler of nations, and a force for peace and justice for our world.



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