



## 3rd Sunday of Easter



**Date:** Sunday, May 4, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C

**First Reading:** Acts 5:27–32, 40b–41

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 30:2, 4–6, 11–13 | **Response:** Psalm 30:2a

**Second Reading:** Revelation 5:11–14

**Gospel Acclamation:** Luke 24:32

**Gospel Reading:** John 21:1–19

**Preached at:** the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

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**T**he sea at dawn is a place of mystery, of beginnings, of hope. The light slowly spills across the horizon. Darkness gives way to morning. In that liminal space—between night and day, between failure and redemption, between doubt and belief—Christ appears once more. Today’s Gospel begins in the grey stillness of uncertainty—Simon Peter, restless, speaks the words of a man searching for purpose: “I am going fishing.” And the others, perhaps sensing the same unspoken longing, follow. They toil all night, casting their nets into familiar waters. But they catch nothing. It’s a scene of futility—a metaphor for our own striving, apart from Christ.

Then, just as morning breaks, a figure appears on the shore. “Have you caught anything, friends?” They do not recognize Him yet. How often do we, exhausted and preoccupied with our own struggles, fail to recognize the presence of Christ in our lives? Yet at His command, they cast their nets once more, and this time, abundance. A net straining with the weight of grace. The beloved disciple sees it first: “It is the Lord!” And Peter—impulsive, passionate Peter—throws himself into the sea, desperate to reach Him.

The heart of today’s readings is this moment of recognition and response. The Acts of the Apostles tells us of Peter and the others standing before the authorities, refusing to be silent about what they have seen and heard. “Obedience to God comes before obedience to men.” These are not the words of the fearful fisherman who once denied Jesus three times. This is a man transformed, a man who has encountered the Risen Christ and cannot turn back. In Revelation, we are drawn into the great cosmic vision of heaven itself, where countless voices

cry out in worship of the Lamb who was slain. The victory of Christ is proclaimed not in the weapons of empire, not in the decrees of rulers, or even the executive orders of presidents, but in the sacrifice of love.

And so we return to the shore of Galilee, to the moment of Peter's redemption. The one who had denied Jesus three times is now given three opportunities to profess his love. But notice how Jesus frames the question—not “Do you believe in me?” or “Will you be faithful?” but “Do you love me?” Three times He asks. Three times Peter responds. And each answer draws him deeper into love, into mission, into grace. It is love that is at the heart of discipleship, love that transforms cowardice into courage, love that calls forth action. “Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep.” This is the commission, the mission, the very shape of Christian life. To love Christ is to care for His people, especially the weak, the poor, the forgotten.

Here is where today's readings challenge us. In Zambia, in 2025, we continue to face economic pressure, youth unemployment, rising costs of living, and the daily burdens carried by our rural and urban poor. Many of our people labour all night and come home with empty nets. In the midst of such struggle, we hear the words of Psalm 30: “You have turned my mourning into dancing.” This is not naïve optimism—it is a summons to hope, rooted in faith and sustained by action.

How do we, as the Church in Zambia, as disciples of Christ, embody this hope? How do we—like Peter, like the apostles—stand before the world and declare, “We must obey God rather than men”? When unjust systems marginalize the poor, when corruption eats away at public trust, when division weakens our unity, will we have the courage to cast our nets once more, trusting in the abundance of God's grace?

The social teaching of the Church reminds us that our faith is never private, never isolated from the real struggles of the world. As the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church states, to truly encounter Christ is to be transformed into people “capable of bringing peace where there is conflict, of building and nurturing fraternal relationships where there is hatred, of seeking justice where there prevails the exploitation of man by man.” This is the mission entrusted to Peter, to the Church, to each one of us. The love of Christ is not an abstraction; it must take flesh in the way we care for and love the least among us.

In Ignatian spirituality, we are often invited to place ourselves within the Gospel scene—to see, to hear, to feel what unfolds. So I invite you now to imagine yourself on that shore. You have labored all night with nothing to show for it. You are tired, perhaps discouraged. And then, a voice calls from the shore, a voice both familiar and startling. “Do you love me?”

What will your answer be? And what will that love look like in your life? Will it lead you to deeper service, to greater generosity, to a courage that stands firm in the face of injustice? Will it move you, as it moved Peter, to cast yourself into the sea, into the unknown, into the arms of Christ?

This week, as you pray and reflect, consider these questions:

- Where is Christ calling me to recognize His presence in my daily life, even in moments of struggle or failure?
- How is my love for Christ expressed in my care for others, especially the poor, the marginalized, and those in need?
- In what ways is Christ inviting me to cast my net again, to trust more deeply in His abundance and His mission for me?

The sea at dawn is a place of mystery, of beginnings, of hope. And Christ is already there, waiting on the shore.

And as we reflect on this Gospel of love and mission, we remember also the Church gathered in Rome. The College of Cardinals is discerning a successor to Peter, one who will be called—like Peter—to love, to feed, and to tend the sheep of Christ across the world. May the Holy Spirit guide them in wisdom, courage, and peace. And may the one chosen be a shepherd after the heart of Christ. Let us pray together:

### **Prayer for the Cardinals preparing for Conclave**

God of wisdom and grace,  
you never cease to call your Church forward.

As the College of Cardinals gathers to discern and elect a new pope,  
grant them inner freedom—free from fear, ambition, and division—  
that they may be truly available to your Spirit.

Give them listening hearts,  
attentive to the cries of the world and the needs of your Church.  
Help them to listen to your Holy Spirit, whom you send to guide them,  
that they may recognize your desire and faithfully follow your will.

Unite us all in prayer,  
that this moment may be one of deep communion,  
true discernment, and renewed hope for your Church.

With Mary, Mother of the Church, we entrust this time to you,  
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.