

3rd Sunday of Easter C

The gospel reading of today once again demonstrates the reality of the resurrection. It removes from the disciples every doubt of his resurrection. It defeats every claim that the appearances of the risen Christ were nothing more than visions or hallucinations. So the purpose of today's gospel story is to make clear that the risen Lord was not a vision or a figment of imagination. It was Jesus himself who had conquered death and came back.

The disciples had returned to their former profession of fishing after the death of Jesus. They fished the whole night but caught nothing. In the morning the risen Lord showed himself to them and asked them to cast their net for a catch. They did and they caught fish—153 of them. According to St. Jerome, 153 catch includes every kind of fish in the sea. So the number symbolizes the fact that all people of all nations will be gathered together to Jesus Christ. The net stands for the Church. There is room in the Church for all people of all nations.

Just as Jesus came to the disciples, he comes to us today in the sacraments—especially in the Eucharist. This is the weekend when many of our children are receiving Jesus for the first time. It is a very important day for them and for our parish community. Jesus gave himself completely to us at the last supper. St. Dominic Savio died at the age of 13. He went to Mass every day. The sacristan would find him keeling and praying in front of the Church door when he came to open them in the morning. The resolution that St. Dominic Savio made at his First Holy Communion was “death rather than sin.”

St. John Bosco received Communion at the age of ten. Recollecting that day, years later he wrote, “My mother kept close to me the whole time. During Lent she had prepared me for Confession. On the day of my First Communion, she accompanied me to the holy table. She did not allow me to do any work that day. She wanted me to read and pray.”

Several times she told me, “Today is a great day for you. God has taken possession of your heart. Promise him to do all you can to be good the rest of your life. Go often to Confession and Communion. Be regular to catechism lessons.” This is a great example of the impact that parents have on their children. Make this day special and memorable for your children, not just by external celebrations, but more by the importance you give to the spiritual preparations.

Today is an important day for you. Ask Jesus for a spiritual gift: the gift of kindness, the gift of patience, the gift of love, the gift of forgiveness, the gift of hard work, the gift of prompt obedience, the gift of compassion, the gift of listening, the gift of prayer, and the gift of generosity. Jesus will give you the gift you ask for today. Treasure Jesus every day in your heart. Love Jesus every day of your life.