**REFLECTIONS ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**OPENING PRAYER**

Generous God, thank you for the homes we have and the food on our tables. You alone know the hungers we bear, and how best they can be satisfied. As we look to you for nourishment, open our eyes to the hungers around us and, with the Spirit of Jesus, give us the voice to call out the invitation, “Come! Eat!” Amen

**SUNDAY GOSPEL READING**

**John 21: 1 – 19**

After this, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way. Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee’s sons, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We also will come with you.” So, they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus who said to them, “Children, have you caught anything to eat?” They answered him, “No.” So he said to them, “Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something.” So, they cast it and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish. When they climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you just caught.” So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come, have breakfast.” And none of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” because they realized it was the Lord. Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.

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.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He then said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was distressed that he had said to him a 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. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, “Follow me.”

**REFLECTIONS ON THE GOSPEL**

Jesus’ followers have begun to resume their usual routines: Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, Zebedee’s sons, and two unnamed disciples are at the Sea of Tiberias and head out to go fishing. Jesus has appeared to them previously, yet when he calls to them from the shore, after an unsuccessful night of fishing, they do not recognize him at first. Only after they had cast their nets on the opposite side of the boat, as he had instructed them, did they know it was Jesus. An explosion of joy erupts as Peter jumps into the water and swims towards Jesus.

Jesus greets them with a fully prepared breakfast at the shore. He knows they have worked hard and are tired and hungry. This meal carries an echo of the Passover celebration: a meal that reminds the people of their history with God and God’s faithful presence throughout that history. It is also reminiscent of the feeding of the multitude: he knows the importance of satisfying physical hunger if people are ever to recognize their need for God. In all these appearances, Jesus is bringing his followers through the first mystagogia, a time of opening up the mysteries of his death and resurrection in the daily living out of their lives. He shows them the reality of his resurrection by eating in their presence.

In this gospel, Jesus shows us how to care and minister to one another. Whether it was feeding a multitude, or just a small band of hungry people, Jesus attended to the needs of the body and spirit. We must be attentive to whatever needs may be presented. As we go about our daily lives, how will we develop this Christlike awareness?

At every turn, we are confronted with a profound hunger for hope, acceptance, forgiveness, and healing. How can we respond to these needs? Those who are hungry must hear and recognize Christ’s voice. Let our invitation to come and eat resonate loudly enough, so those who are hungry may hear and recognize our voice as the voice of Christ.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

* Think about a time you were really hungry in your spiritual life? What was the experience like? How were you fed?
* What are the hungers I see most clearly in my own community?
* How does the reception of the Eucharist strengthen me to reach out and meet the needs of those who are hungry?
* How can I be the voice of Christ, in my community and beyond, offering provision for the hungers of the spirit, as well as the hungers of the body?
* To whom could I do a better job of witnessing to Christ? How will I go about this?