

St Pius & St Anthony Homily 3rd Sunday Easter Year C

Peter sure seems to have a great and welcome idea to the other apostles, ‘Let’s go fishing’! And they all jump on board! Fishing is great, but for the apostles, after having followed & fished with Jesus (for bigger things than the sea provides) with Jesus, will it ever be the same without him? No, but Peter leads them into that spent ‘fishing hole’ anyway and they find that out. What is going on? I suggest that it is the trauma of the crucifixion that has shell-shocked them, and not being able to shake out of their minds, those images of Christ’s torture and execution, along with the fresh revelations of Jesus risen now, but not yet fully definitively back with them, what is Peter to do, but revert back to what he knew beforehand. Peter falls back on what he knew for sure, before meeting Jesus. He longs for those days with Jesus again, but fears they are over and gone. He’s lost that edge. So what is he to do? Go back to the beginning, but now for the first time (*I know that sounds funny-it is the second time, But not really, because I didn’t appreciate or really know it the first time!*) So Peter does what anyone does when we lose something? Go back to the beginning, retrace your steps-reset your day to the last time you know you had it. So, recently, I lost my phone: I know that I gathered it up with a stack of papers, and a coffee cup, and batch of bulletins (and kid’s bulletins & oh, a couple of ‘missalettes’, a few envelopes of notes to hand out at mass, and finally, I got into the rectory, and started putting things in all of their various places, the phone is in my pocket, right? No. Now where did I set it? Someone says, “Call it”, that’s no help, it is always muted. “Use Find Phone App” , No, I don’t do location services. So, I go back to the beginning. Retrace my steps, ***it is going to be in the last place I look right?*** Where was it? Well, it was back safely in the truck tucked between the seat and console where it fell when I just couldn’t stop loading up extra things to carry in! It is what we do: Go back to the beginning. That is what Peter is leading (but mis-leading) the apostles to do also as a desperate attempt to try recovering. If there are any Music group ‘ColdPlay’ fans here, isn’t this the coping mechanism described in the song ‘the Scientist’. Its lyrics say, ‘Let’s go back to the Start’ where he is trying to rediscover a ‘first love’. What Chris Martin sings, is, ***take me back to the Start, questions of science-science and progress, do not speak as loud as my heart***. That same tugging from one’s heart, exactly the same thing that the two disciples on the road to Emmaus say to each other as they ‘re-engage with Jesus on the road, when they share, “Were not our hearts burning within us, as he spoke to us on the way” (Luke 24:32) {This is what the

French philosopher Pascal in the 1600's reminded us, that 'The soul or heart has reasons the mind doesn't know'. So, Peter tries to recover Jesus by going back to where he first met him. Peter is not alone about this, I wonder if his move of returning to the fishing boat, is any different than the two disciples who were leaving out of Jerusalem going back to Emmaus maybe to try regaining a Jesus-bearing back in their old haunts. Or Mary Magdalene who left the company of the disciples to venture out alone back to the garden, maybe the same garden that she had spent time alone with Jesus pouring her heart out to Jesus before. I understand why Peter is falling back into what he did before meeting Jesus, it is what he knows. It may or may not work, but it is what he knows-he is trying. Reminds me a little of the guy who lost his wallet at a dinner party. He had got out of his car, walked across the yard and once inside, he felt his pocket and no wallet! So while he left and was outside looking, the host helped and asked him, "Your car is on the street and you walked straight across the yard, what are you doing looking, wandering over there at driveway garage?" He said, "The light is better over here!" Well, it is good try, but if you were never over there-little chance of finding it! But Peter does know to go back where he experienced Jesus once before in a most powerful way being caught by Jesus Himself in the miraculous catch of fish. And Jesus will provide all over again (but now for the first time). John's gospel here tells of miraculous catch of fish at the end of the book. But Luke's gospel however told of a miraculous catch of fish at the very beginning (Luke 5). It is not that one gospel is right and the other not. No, these two accounts can easily be reconciled because Jesus often had repeat miracles (*how many blind people, or lepers did he cure-Mark's gospel has Jesus uniquely conduct two miraculous feedings of 5,000 and then 4,000 people in Mark 6 & Mark 8*) I believe there can be two miraculous catches- John happens to tell of one, and Luke another one! Thanks be to God, Jesus knows where to go to call, find, and catch Peter and apostles back to him again. This story is about more than just Peter recovering his first feeling of Jesus again. It is Jesus' redemption story of Peter and the apostles. The fact that the apostles definitely need Jesus is shown by their completely empty nets when they try fishing without Him. So this story is a redemption encounter. Peter's redemption dialogue is a more dramatic one, as he gets an opportunity to redo with grace, his public testimony claiming Christ (*three times he had denied Jesus in John 18:15-27 & here three times he affirms his acceptance of Jesus in John 21:15-17—Another link signal between both scenes is that they take place by charcoal fires John 18:18, John 21:9*) So noteworthy of Jesus' actions here for Peter & the apostles is how kind a Savior we have. Jesus lets us be part of our redemption

(contributing our part in being rehabilitated). Jesus forgives, but gives Peter an active role in 'saving face' by giving him a microphone to redeem himself-like a comeback tour. And Jesus does the same for the other apostles as they have opportunity to bring some of their catch to mix in with and join Jesus' already simmering fish-bake in the fire on seashore. Jesus invites them to bring their contribution and rejoin his mission work of feeding others (remember what is going to become of this miraculous catch-likely another major feeding of what a crowd of 5,000 AGAIN?) So, part of Jesus' resurrection work is to recover the initial zeal/devotion of the apostles, to feed and lead them to again take up his mission of tending, protecting keeping whole, His flock. But Jesus knows our pace, so He will take small steps with the apostles, continuing to meet with them and further teach them for the 40 days, leading up to His Ascension. From there, His return gift of the empowering Holy Spirit at Pentecost will motivate them to take up afresh the universal mission of spreading the Kingdom of God upon all the world. So this Easter Days, are also a time for us, to recover (have we lost anything?), to redeem lost time, and rediscover Jesus in our lives: that He and we may rise to new life together.