

APRIL 18, 2021 – THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Dear Parishioners

When the disciples gave Jesus a piece of baked fish, he took it and ate it in front of them. We shouldn't see this as an act only to prove that Jesus was resurrected with flesh and bones, not a ghost. There are four implications for this action.

First, it was an act of consideration. How startled and terrified the disciples were when they saw the risen Christ! And they must have been scared and afraid. On the other hand, there must have been a sorry feeling among themselves because they had abandoned him when he got arrested. So, they couldn't get close to Jesus, and they must have felt awkward. So, Jesus wanted to get rid of the awkwardness by asking "Have you anything here to eat?" and ate the baked fish they gave. Jesus was saying to them like this, "I am the same Jesus I used to eat, drink, and walk with you guys. Don't treat me like a stranger. I don't have anything against you. So, come to me as close as you used to." When Jesus asks for something to eat and eats the fish, it is an act of consideration to eliminate the uneasy feelings of the disciples and bring back the old friendliness.

Second, Jesus wanted to teach the meaning of the resurrection. On the last Day of Judgment, the body is resurrected and reunited with the soul. That said, he ate fish to let us know that the resurrection is not a remote future, but a concrete reality that can happen and be experienced in our daily lives, like eating a meal. In fact, we partake of Jesus' suffering by denying ourselves, taking up our crosses, and following Jesus, and as a result we share in His resurrection. This is something we can experience in everyday life. Jesus wanted to teach his disciples and us this fact by eating the baked fish.

Third, he shows us what the resurrected body is like. There are many characteristics of the resurrected body, but especially you can eat

anything to your heart's content with the resurrected body. Still, you are not gaining weight. You don't have to worry about indigestion, getting an upset stomach, or getting sick when you eat. Because there is no pain or death in Heaven. This is a great news for those who have not been able to eat all kinds of food due to health issues such as allergies or diabetes. When your body gets resurrected, you can eat them all again. Jesus says, "People will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29). Jesus also said that the kingdom of God is like a wedding feast or banquet (Matthew 22:1-22). Can food be left out at the banquet table?

Fourth and the last meaning is spiritual in nature and can be interpreted in connection with another post-Easter episode. On the morning that the seven disciples caught nothing from fishing, the resurrected Jesus revealed Himself and said to them to cast the net over the right side of the boat. The disciples caught one hundred fifty-three large fish by obeying His command. When they climbed out on shore, they found Jesus prepared a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. And Jesus gave them to the disciples (John 21:1-13). We all know this episode.

What might the disciples have thought when Jesus was eating the piece of baked fish? I would have thought 'Ah, our Lord was starving. This small piece of fish is too little. I wish I had more to offer Him.' Jesus was offered only a small piece of fish but several days later gave them back plenty.

Isn't this happening to us as well? We don't give Jesus much but receive so much in return. Showered with Jesus' blessing and grace, but are we not still standing with a piece of baked fish when He asked us, "Have you anything here to eat?" I often find myself holding a tiny little fish in my hands and staring at the ground before Jesus. Yet, Jesus receives my humble offerings with joy and continuously bestows His blessings on me. Jesus grants us many great blessings including a far greater blessing, i.e.,

Himself in the Eucharist. We who receive Jesus in the Eucharist, in reality, should live just the way Jesus did and return our lives to Jesus. However, often times, that is not the case. Jesus in the Eucharist continues to come to us as we are filled with remorse and regrets, and, yet he still lovingly draws us into His heart as He says to us, “It is okay. You can do better next time.” Aided with His encouragement, power, and presence, we, once again, make a resolution to return His blessings more next time.

Today, Jesus once again asks each of us, “Have you anything here to eat?”

Fr. Don Bosco Park