

EASTER: IN FAITH WE CELEBRATE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Third Sunday of Easter

April 22, 2007

Acts 9:1-6 [7-20]

Psalm 30

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

A Lakeside Breakfast

He carefully arranged the charcoal, got the fire going and then methodically began to prepare breakfast – brewing the coffee, and frying the potatoes, bacon, and eggs sunnyside up. Fresh cantaloupe and bakery-fresh rolls would be on the picnic table, and soon the aroma from the food cooking on the fire would whet our appetites.

Preparing breakfast on those picnics in Bear Mountain, NY – at Lake Sebego or Lake Tiorati – is among the fond memories I have of my father. A simple act, yet one of love. At my father's memorial service five years ago, I recounted those picnic breakfast memories and read the Gospel text assigned for this week.

In this third post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to his disciples, we find him engaged in the act of preparing breakfast. Fish is being cooked over a charcoal fire, and bread is at hand.

It is dawn and Jesus is standing on the shore, but the disciples don't recognize him even though they are addressed familiarly as "friends" (21:4, 5). The disciples had been fishing all night and their nets were empty. But at the "stranger's" instructions, they let down their nets again and their efforts yield 153 fish (21:11). At that moment, the beloved disciple declares, "It's the Lord" (21:7).

"Come and eat!" Jesus calls out while the disciples are just getting out of their fishing boats. In the act of breaking bread (21:13), as Jesus did in the presence of the two disciples along the Emmaus road (Luke 24:30, 31), the disciples recognize their Lord (21:12). Jesus feeds them; and in this simple and loving act, he prepares them for the future. The 153 fish is symbolic of the abundance and all-inclusive nature of the catch. The net of discipleship is about to be cast throughout the world.

Is Jesus' conversation with Peter (21:15-19) a test of faithfulness? As they sat around that charcoal fire, did Peter recall warming himself over a charcoal fire days earlier and denying his beloved Lord? Yet here is Jesus, asking Peter if he loves him and challenging him to discipleship. Jesus' three questions serve as a counterbalance to those

previous denials. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, ordains Peter to assume the role of a shepherd and to feed Jesus' lambs.

Jesus' call to Peter to follow him is now a call that is extended to us. Jesus feeds us. We are nurtured by God's Word. We are called to feed Jesus' lambs and take care of his sheep. Let us heed Jesus' call and follow him!

This week's Reflection was prepared by Barbara Bernstengel, who serves on the staff of the American Bible Society as Director of the Education Unit in the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship.

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This week we remember to pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Togo – With thanks to God for the translation of the New Testament into Mina-Gen and Moba Lok, and with prayers for the translation of the Old Testament into Bassar, Kabye, Lama and Mina-Gen, and for the work in harmonizing the orthography for languages in which Togo has literacy programs; **Benin** – With thanks to God for good relations with all the churches, and with prayers for translation, literacy, and *Faith Comes By Hearing* programs; **Niger** – With thanks to God for a new distribution vehicle, and with prayers that churches will become more open to and supportive of Bible work, and with prayers for work with churches and Christian organizations among TAZI audiences; **Nigeria** – With thanks to God for the successful launch of the Yoruba and Igbo Bibles in modern orthography and diglot Bibles in Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, and with prayers for the launch of programs aimed at political leaders and at young people.

Activity Corner: “Feed My Lambs” Breakfast

Supplies needed: Bible; construction paper; *pattern in the shape of a lamb (approximately 3”x 4”); pens or pencils; scissors; food items for breakfast. (*An alternative way of making a lamb is to trace one's hand on a sheet of construction paper, keeping one's fingers spread apart as much as possible. The thumb becomes the lamb's “head,” and the four fingers become the lamb's “legs.” The “body” can then be covered with cotton balls.)

Gather members of your household and plan a family breakfast. If weather conditions are favorable, consider planning an outdoor breakfast. Out of construction paper, prepare placecards for everyone in the shape of lambs. (Fold a sheet of construction paper in half and trace the shape of a lamb while maintaining the upper part of the pattern against the fold of the paper. When cutting out the lamb, the folded paper will serve as a tent placecard.) Arrange the food in the center of the table to encourage everyone to share the food with one another. Prior to the meal, read together Revelation 5:11-13, and during the meal discuss how Jesus, as the Lamb of God, now feeds us and how, we in turn, are to feed one another. Conclude by singing one of your favorite hymns of praise.

