



Third Sunday of Easter

† Sunday 5th May 2019

England & Wales Cycle of Prayer:

New Members of the Church

Keynote: Joy at dawn in meeting the risen Lord!

Acts of the Apostles 5: 27-32, 40-41

Again brought before the Temple authorities, the disciples are told they must not preach in the name of Jesus. *'We gave you a formal warning,'* the High Priest said *'not to preach in this name, and what have you done? You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching...'* Peter and the apostles boldly reply: *'Obedience to God comes before obedience to men; it was the God of our ancestors who raised up Jesus... God has now raised him up to be the leader and saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sin... we are witnesses to all this, we and the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.'* Peter's speech contains the primitive kerygma – the teaching of the apostles – that sets out the main elements of the early Christian preaching. Christ's disciples today are the witnesses for this age sharing the good news with anyone who is prepared to listen.

Responsorial Psalm 29 (30) – A song of thanksgiving for recovery from sickness. Alleluia!

Book of Revelation 5: 11-14

The language used in this book, is quite literally 'beyond our ken!' The imagery and poetic style are both mystical and difficult to interpret. Yet this vision – of some great heavenly assembly – is quite breath taking: *'Then I heard all the living things in creation – everything that lives in the air, and on the ground, and under the ground, and in the sea, crying: "To the One who is sitting on the throne be all praise, honour, glory and power, for ever and ever."* The Apostle John in his vision reminds us of the great holiness of God, and of our own place in the scheme of things. We can join with the elders prostrated in worship and say our 'Amen'. In our Eucharist today, we are reminded of this 'Great Amen' when we acclaim the presence of Christ at the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer.

Gospel according to John 21: 1-19

Dawn on the Sea of Tiberius. After a long night fishing, those in the boats are hungry and tired. On the shore, breakfast prepared, awaits their coming to the beach. *'It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples did not recognise that it was Jesus.'* Following his instructions they cast their net to starboard *'and there were so many fish they could not haul the net in.'* In that moment the Apostle whom Jesus loved says to Peter, *'It is the Lord!'* Peter ever the impetuous man of the moment leaps into the water and makes his way to the shore, to be joined by the rest of the disciples with their boats. *'As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread there, and a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it.'* There are two main incidents in the account, the hauling in of the huge catch of fish, and the threefold profession of faith by Simon Peter. Peter plays a leading role in both. *'Simon, son of John, do you love me?'* asks Jesus, maybe recalling Peter's earlier thrice repeated denial: 'I know not the man!' Sounding almost desperate at being asked the same question three times, Peter says: *'Lord, you know everything, you know I love you.'* Jesus says to him *'Feed my sheep'*. In the light of the dawn of this new day the disciples recognise their risen Lord and Master. Is there a contrast here, between the darkness of the waters on the lake, and the futile labours of the fishermen; and now with the new dawn a huge catch so full of promise? When our lives have dark moments, as they surely do, we might look to the shore and recognise the risen Lord beckoning to us, standing ready to welcome us.