



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

Saint Peter's Square

Third Sunday of Easter, 10 April 2016

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today's Gospel recounts the third apparition of the Risen Jesus to the disciples, with the account of the miraculous catch on the shore of the lake of Galilee (cf. Jn 21:1-19). The narrative is situated in the context of the everyday life of the disciples, who returned to their land and to their work as fishermen, after the shocking days of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. It was difficult for them to understand what had taken place. Even though everything seemed finished, Jesus "seeks" his disciples once more. It is He who goes to seek them. This time he meets them at the lake, where they have spent the night in their boats catching nothing. The nets appear empty, in a certain sense, like the tally of their experience with Jesus: they met him, they left everything to follow him, full of hope... and now? Yes, they saw he was risen, but then they were thought: "He went away and left us.... It was like a dream...".

So it is that at sunrise Jesus presents himself on the lakeshore; however they do not recognize him (cf. v. 4). The Lord says to those tired and disappointed fishermen: "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some" (v. 6). The disciples trust in Jesus and the result is an incredibly abundant catch. At this point John turns to Peter and says: "It is the Lord!" (v. 7). Right away Peter throws himself into the water and swims to the shore, toward Jesus. In that exclamation: "It is the Lord!", there is all the enthusiasm of the Paschal faith, full of joy and wonder, which sharply contrasts with the disappearance, the dejection, the sense of powerlessness that had accumulated in the disciples' hearts. The presence of the Risen Jesus transforms everything: darkness has become light, futile work has again become fruitful and promising, the sense of weariness and abandonment give way to a new impetus and to the certainty that He is with us.

From that time, these same sentiments enliven the Church, the Community of the Risen One. All of us are the community of the Risen One! At first glance it might sometimes seem that the darkness of evil and the toil of daily living have got the upper hand, the Church knows with certainty that the now everlasting light of Easter shines upon those who follow the Lord Jesus. The great message of the Resurrection instills in the hearts of believers profound joy and invincible hope. Christ is truly risen! Today too, the Church continues to make this joyous message resound: joy and hope continue to flow in hearts, in faces, in gestures, in words. We Christians are all called to communicate this message of resurrection to those we meet, especially to those who suffer, to those who are alone, to those who find themselves in precarious conditions, to the sick, to refugees, to the marginalized. Let us make a ray of the light of the Risen Christ, a sign of his powerful mercy, reach everyone.

May he, the Lord, also renew in us the Paschal faith. May he render us ever more aware of our mission at the service of the Gospel and of our brothers and sisters; may he fill us with his Holy Spirit so that, sustained by the intercession of Mary, with all the Church we may proclaim the greatness of his love and the abundance of his mercy.

After the Regina Caeli:

Dear brothers and sisters, in the hope given to us by the Risen Christ, I renew my appeal for the liberation of all people who have been seized in areas of armed conflict; in particular I would like to remember the Salesian priest Tom Uzhunnalil, abducted in Aden, Yemen on 4 March.

I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from various parts of the world.

I thank the parish choirs for their presence; some of them have lent their service in recent days in St Peter's Basilica. Thank you very much! I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*