

Missionary Commentary

Third Sunday of Easter

May 4, 2025

Sunday Readings

Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41

Psalms 30:2, 4-6, 11-13

Revelations 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

[**USCCB Link to the Readings**](#)

A Fishing Experience

As I write, it has been only a few days since Pope Francis has been called home. I am mourning for the man who has led the Church for almost 13 years and has been an example of the kind of missionary disciple that I long to be. At the same time, I am mourning the loss of my sister who died yesterday after a long illness and who is only two years older than I am. We grew up together, shared a bedroom, shared clothes when we were in high school and are lifelong Beatle fans. Although we did not share the same expressions of faith, my sister was a wonderful sister, wife, mother and grandmother. Her funeral will be in a few days and then it will be back to a normal life without my sister's physical presence.

Following the death of Jesus, the apostles felt lost and abandoned. Jesus was gone and they were without direction. They just didn't know what to do. They were to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus, but now what? The love of Jesus and his words over these last three years were not enough for them to decide the next step. Then Jesus returns in a different way to console them and lead them into the future. Their mission is just beginning, but they need to be strengthened for the journey without his physical presence.

We all know that Pentecost will soon bring the apostles and the women together with the strength of their faith and the conviction they had of being sent out to all peoples. The Spirit is now their wisdom and guide. We know this story very well and we are inspired as we witness what is ours to do, embracing the force of the Paschal Mystery. Pope Francis declared this a Holy Year exhorting all of us to be Pilgrims of Hope. I must confess that I was finding it very difficult to be a hopeful person. There are too many seemingly hopeless situations, events and issues facing us. However, I have found wisdom in this Easter time which encourages me and deepens my desire to be a hopeful presence among God's people.

Jesus is always present with us. *Always!* Never ending. Forever sure. You changed my mourning into dancing. (Ps. 30) We find hope in the ordinary things of life. We find hope in the darkest moments of life, amidst the pain and sorrow, knowing that the Spirit is with us. We need to repeat our love and commitment to God's mission by saying, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you!" I am really reassuring myself and not trying to convince God. We need to eat with Jesus. The Eucharist has many forms; one being at the Eucharistic table, but also at the table of the rejected, the lost ones, the forgotten ones. We must feed the sheep. We must be willing to give up control and go where God needs us, and it doesn't have to be farther than my street or my house. We must follow Jesus, in word and in deed.

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As we mourn for Pope Francis, as I mourn my sister, as you mourn what you have lost, let us be Pilgrims of Hope bringing God's love to all. It may start with a simple fishing experience that will lead us on the way. However the beginning is, let us get our fishing poles ready! And don't forget the bait. (Sounds like it could be a future reflection...)

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading — Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41 — The key word for this reading is “witness” and the consequences of being a witness. The apostles now understand what being an apostle of Jesus really means. They rejoiced as they suffered dishonor because they spoke the truth that Jesus taught them.

Responsorial Psalm— 30: 2, 4-6, 11-13 — The psalmist recognizes the dynamic of darkness and light, weeping and rejoicing, mourning and dancing. Our lives will always have these contrasts but trusting in God will be the dawn that comes from on high with new life.

Second Reading — Revelations 5:11-14 — John hears the voices of all the creatures as Jesus is praised as the Lamb who was sacrificed for all of us. Our voices, too, join in praising and thanking the Lamb for loving us so much that the sacrifice was generously made by our brother, Jesus.

Gospel — John 20:1-9 — What a powerful Gospel this is with all the scenes from the first days after the Resurrection! The apostles try to return to a normal life as they struggle with the death of Jesus. At first they don't even recognize him and when they do, they are afraid to ask him. Jesus questions the love of Peter and has Peter repeat his love for Jesus three times. All of these narrations help us to go deeper in our personal reflections of who Jesus is to us and who we are to Jesus.

Notes and commentary by Sr. Nancy Schramm, osf, a [Franciscan Sister of the Sacred Heart](#) currently ministering at a rural mission church in Pembroke Township, Illinois who previously served in the Amazon area of Brazil for 32 years and is past president of USCMA.

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