

Notes for Next Sunday

Third Sunday of Easter

The Point of this Week's Readings

First Reading (Acts 9:1-22). This reading is all about Saul's conversion. Saul (Paul) was a real firebrand who today might well be known as a terrorist. Whatever Saul/Paul was into, he did it with all his might. We might say 110%. He had orders from the high priest to go to Damascus and arrest many Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem. Jesus intercepts Saul/Paul by striking him down as well as blinding Saul/Paul and giving him new orders. Jesus also orders Saul/Paul to go to Ananias to have his blindness cleared. Ananias shakes in boots but does as Jesus told him. What follows that meeting is example of how Paul will be "all-in" in doing the Lord's work until he is martyred.

Second Reading (Revelation 5:1-14). Jesus Christ is introduced in the vision of God's heavenly glory as the victorious Lamb. He is presented to the heavenly host as the one who can receive the scroll from God and look into it. His receiving the scroll from God is also a demonstration and a vindication that His death and resurrection were a victory for God and his people (CC p. 134). Verses 9 through 13 are filled with songs of praise directed at Jesus the Lamb for what He has done.

Gospel (John 21:1-19). This reading is about Jesus appearing once more to some of the disciples and reinstating Peter after Peter had so blatantly denied Jesus during Jesus' trial. This appearance takes place at the Sea of Tiberias better known as the Sea of Galilee. The disciples had been told to wait for the Holy Spirit. To fill in the time a small group of disciples were gathered and Peter suggested that they resort to what they had done much of their life, go fishing. They caught nothing during the favored time (nighttime) of fishing. By now Jesus is on the shore and recommends that they throw the net on the other side of the boat. While this is going on John recognizes that the man on the shore is Jesus. On hearing John's proclamation, Peter, in his usual impetuous manner, hurries to the shore. After breakfast Jesus reinstates Peter.

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

FIRST READING – Acts 9:1-22

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. ¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. ¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named

Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”¹³ “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem.”¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.”¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

9:2 *Damascus*. Located in the Roman province of Syria, it was the nearest important city outside Palestine. It also had a large Jewish population. The distance from Jerusalem to Damascus was about 150 miles, four to six days’ travel. (CSB)

9:2 *the Way*. Name for Christianity; only in Acts. The origin of the term remains obscure. (TLSB)

9:5-6 *Lord?* Not an expression of faith but of respect. Up to this moment, Saul was convinced that his mission pleased God. *I am Jesus*. The Lord answers Saul’s question concerning His identity by speaking and acting as God, directing Saul on where to go and saying no more. (TLSB)

SECOND READING – Revelation 5:1-14

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits^a of God sent out into all the earth.⁷ He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.⁹ And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.¹² In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

5:1 *scroll*. Symbolizes God's plan of salvation. (TL SB)

5:1 *writing on both sides*. Implies that God's plan is comprehensive and complete. (TL SB)

5:1 *sealed with seven seals*.† Indicating absolute inviolability (cf. Isa 29:11; Da 12:4). Scrolls are sealed because they refer to the future, which is a closed book to men until revealed by God. (CSB)

5:2 *mighty angel*. Though John does not explicitly say so, it is likely that this angel is of a different rank from the living creatures described in 4:6-7. Different angels fulfill a variety of functions in Revelation (cf. 1:20; 4:6-7; 7:1; 9:15; 20:1). (TL SB)

5:5 *Lion of the tribe of Judah*. A Messianic title taken from Ge 49:8–10, where Judah is named a "lion's cub" and promised the right to rule "until he comes to whom it belongs." (CSB)

5:6 *seven horns*. The horn is an ancient Jewish symbol for power or strength (cf. Dt 33:17). The fourth beast of Da 7:7, 20 had ten horns (cf. Da 8:3, 5). Seven horns would symbolize full strength. (CSB)

GOSPEL – John 21:1-19

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: ² Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. ³ "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. ⁴ Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. ⁵ He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. ⁶ He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. ⁷ Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. ⁸ The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. ⁹ When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." ¹¹ Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

21:4 *did not realize that it was Jesus*. The fishermen did not recognize that the person on the shore was Jesus. The boat was 100 yards from shore (v. 8), and the light of day was still dim. (TL SB)

21:5 *friends*. This is the Greek word for a loving title for children in a close family relationship. This was extraordinary considering how the apostles had acted during Holy Week. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

21:11 153. The miracle continues to grow. First catching fish at the wrong time, then catching so many and finally this fact. It shows us that we should not be surprised at what God can do through us.

An astonishing catch – so impressive that the disciples actually counted them. Additional details enhance the extraordinary nature of the catch. Cf Luke 5:1-11. (TLSB)

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

The Greek word for “love” in Jesus’ first two questions is different from that in his third question and in all Peter’s answers.

“You know that I love (*philō*) you.” Peter uses a word that expresses emotional longing, but not the altruistic word *agapē* (a matter of the intellect and will), which Jesus uses. He is humbled, yet speaks with faith, “You know, Lord.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 1)

21:15 Feed my lambs. The Lord was calling Peter away from his former profession to be a shepherd of His flock, a comparison for what would become the “pastoral” ministry. (TLSB)

In the Greek the word “feed” can be translated “continue to feed.” (PBC)

21:16 take care of my sheep. “My sheep” are here the entire flock and thus include any lambs, though without mentioning them in particular. (Lenski)

21:18 stretch out your hands. The early church understood this as a prophecy of crucifixion. (CSB)

21:19 the kind of death. Peter would be a martyr. Tradition indicates that he was crucified upside down. (CSB)