

May 4, 2025

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Easter



Center for Spiritual Development

WHEN LOVE INVITES AGAIN

By Lucy Dominguez

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

*When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter,
"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"
Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."
Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."
He then said to Simon Peter a second time,
"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"
Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."
Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."
Jesus said to him the third time,
"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"
Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time,
"Do you love me?" and he said to him,
"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."
Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep.
Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger,*

*you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted;
but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands,
and someone else will dress you
and lead you where you do not want to go."
He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God.
And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."*

JOHN 21:15-19

Reflection

There's something tender and human about this scene by the Sea of Tiberias. After the trauma of the crucifixion and the mystery of the resurrection, we find the disciples returning to something familiar: fishing. It's as if they are trying to anchor themselves in something they know, something tangible. Still likely grappling with shame from denying Jesus three times, Peter doesn't offer a grand theological statement; he says, "I'm going fishing." And the others follow.

This return to the ordinary becomes the very place where Jesus meets them.

Isn't that often how grace works? In the weariness of our routines, in our empty nets, Jesus appears quietly and unexpectedly, asking, "Have you caught anything?" Here, he meets the disciples in the exhaustion of a night without fruit. And then he gently offers a new way: "Cast the net to the right." Their obedience leads to abundance -- not just fish, but recognition. The disciple whom Jesus loved whispers what we all long to hear: "It is the Lord."

Peter, impulsive and passionate, does not hesitate. He throws himself into the water. There's something beautifully raw in that moment. Peter's heart recognizes Jesus before his mind can process it. Love doesn't wait.

Then comes breakfast. Jesus doesn't just meet them spiritually; he feeds them, nurtures them, and prepares a meal. The image of the charcoal fire echoes the one where Peter had stood during the night of his denial. Around another charcoal fire, Jesus now gently begins to restore him.

Three questions. Three chances to say, "I love you." Each one undoes the pain of those three denials. Jesus doesn't merely accept Peter's love; he gives him a mission: "Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep." This is love in action, love that leads to care and demands we do something for others.

And then, that final, sacred invitation: "Follow me."

This gospel reminds us that Jesus doesn't wait for us to have it all together

before he calls us. He comes into our empty nights, failed efforts, and ordinary lives. He meets us where we are, feeds us, restores us, and invites us again into the journey of love.



People in the Boat During Sunrise
Photo by Kien Virak

For Pondering

- Where in your ordinary life are your "going fishing" moments? Might Jesus be quietly waiting to meet you? Consider the routines or spaces that feel unremarkable or even fruitless. What might it look like to recognize his presence there?
 - What are the "charcoal fires" in your life, moments of regret or failure, where Jesus might invite you into healing and restoration? Reflect on how love, rather than shame, might be the path to transformation in those spaces.
 - How are you being called to respond to Jesus' invitation, "Do you love me?" in tangible ways, through care, service, or presence to others? In what ways might your love for Christ be expressed through action today?
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For Prayer

Suscipe (Take, Lord, Receive)

*Take, Lord, and receive
all my liberty,
my memory,
my understanding,
and my entire will,
all I have and call my own.
You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.
Everything is yours;
do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.*

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

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