

Homily – 3rd Sunday of Easter – 1st May 2022

When Pedro Arrupe, the Father General of the Jesuit Order was asked 40 years ago by Italian Television, ‘Who for you is Jesus Christ?’ – His answer was both simple but profound, “For me, Christ is Everything’, - He went on to say, Christ was and is my ideal since I was a young man, he was and is my way; he was and always will be my strength, that if Christ were removed from my life, it would collapse like a body without skeleton, heart or head.

The mood or genre of this profession of faith is captured so beautifully in today’s Gospel, where the appearance of the resurrected Jesus, goes hand in hand with the working lives of apostolic fisherman and very importantly the eucharistic meal on the sea shore with Jesus truly present. Jesus declares, at the start of the Gospel, “You will now become fisher of men” – and so indeed they are; evangelising and proclaiming the Gospel. The rich catch of fish is a miraculous sign that their faith in the risen Christ will bring many disciples in the times to come.

We also see in the person of Jesus that beautiful and unique combination, as Arrupe teaches us, - Christ Jesus combines Divine Power with being affectionate and tender to the young, the poor and the broken hearted. At the heart of Jesus is love, and this love gives life to everything else, - he makes us see that he is our friend, especially in the Eucharist.

The shared meal prepared by Jesus on the seashore is not merely a ‘Home Delivery’ – This meal of bread and fish ratifies three important points: firstly, that he loves us and seeks to nourish the apostles and their successors in the apostolic work of bringing salvation to the whole world.

Secondly, Jesus is reaffirming the truth of his physical resurrection from the dead, that he is not merely a ghost/phantom, but in his

bodily form he paves the way for the redemption of those who depart from this world at one with God.

Thirdly, this is not like a 'funeral tea' after someone has died, at the bowling club, where we reminisce about what a wonderful person they were, or a bit of a character, this is a reaffirmation of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper; teaching the world that Jesus Christ, has not abandoned us; that he is made present in the sacramental breaking of the bread – that covenant or bond of faithful love remains real and present to us.

All of these purposes and perhaps more besides, are a sign that Jesus seeks to be at the heart of our existence on this earth. When we profess faith in Our Blessed Lord, he calls on us to put his beloved heart next to ours and that together we deal with the challenges of life that is why it is right that the Holy Eucharist is at the heart of the Mass, the tabernacle at the centre of the church behind the altar, and that Jesus on a Sunday so central to our very existence.

When St Paul announced in Corinth the great meaning of his apostolic life, he said, 'Indeed the love of Christ holds us and we realise he died for us all', Paul was referring principally to the love which Jesus had for him. The love of Christ then, had taken possession of his heart.

- And the same thing happens to each committed Catholic Christian, to those who join the mystical Body of Christ, to the person who truly lives his/her faith.

In them lives the love of Christ which continues loving God and humanity which continues to work, to strive and to sacrifice itself. Thereby, the centre of our Catholic Christian life, remains the Heart of Jesus Christ.

God Bless you all, Alleluia

Canon Jeremy C Bath