

Reflections for the 3rd Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)

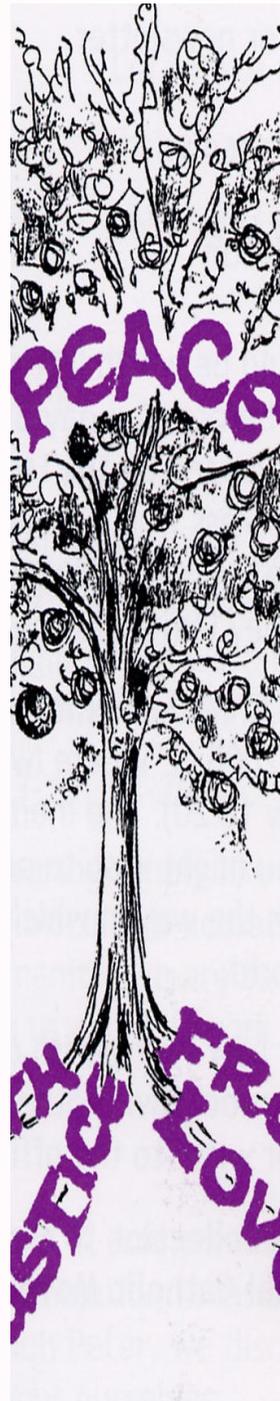
Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

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Follow me, and witness to peace, forgiveness and reconciliation

In today's First Reading Peter's defence before the High Priest is that; '*Obedience to God comes before obedience to men*'. These words echo through the centuries.

We might think of St Thomas More's words at his trial; '*I die the King's good servant but God's first*'. Or St Oscar Romero's call to the El Salvador military the day before his assassination; '*When you hear a man telling you to kill, remember God's words, 'Thou shalt not kill'. No soldier is obliged to obey a law contrary to the law of God. In the name of God, in the name of our tormented people, I beseech you, I implore you; in the name of God I command you to stop the repression*'.

The Gospel Reading - John 21 - is an epilogue to the Fourth Gospel and is equally relevant to us today as it was to the early Christian community. It is filled with symbolic language concerning the **mission and ministry** of the Church - the people of God.

The '*153 fish*' (a triangular number, a perfect number, meaning all are included) and the unbroken net represents the **mission call** of Luke's Jesus to become; '*fishers of men*'.

The commission to; '*Feed my sheep*' represents the Good Shepherd's pastoral **ministry** which should be continued by those who choose to follow Jesus.

To be a missionary and to minister is not possible without Jesus. Alone, the disciples toil through the night, in vain. Indeed, Peter and the disciples remind the High Priest that they are not alone when they preach the Gospel but that God's Holy Spirit is with them. '*Follow me*'

Let us pray for the strength of the Holy Spirit, and as the people of God to follow Jesus' **mission** to proclaim the joy of the Good News and to **minister** his love, peace, forgiveness and reconciliation.