

# Gratitude Foundation

---



*“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?  
Has only this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?”*

(Lk. 17:15-17)

## The Third Sunday of Easter—Year C

---

Fr. Glenn Joseph Theoret  
Executive Director

[www.gratitudefoundation.us](http://www.gratitudefoundation.us)  
[frglenn@gratitudefoundation.us](mailto:frglenn@gratitudefoundation.us)

3713 County 416 20th Road  
Gladstone, MI 49837

*“In all things give thanks, it is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”*

(1 Thess: 5:18)

# Third Sunday of Easter - C

## Reading 1

**Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41**

When the captain and the court officers had brought the apostles in  
and made them stand before the Sanhedrin,  
the high priest questioned them,  
"We gave you strict orders, did we not,  
to stop teaching in that name?  
Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching  
and want to bring this man's blood upon us."  
But Peter and the apostles said in reply,  
"We must obey God rather than men.  
The God of our ancestors raised Jesus,  
though you had him killed by hanging him on a tree.  
God exalted him at his right hand as leader and savior  
to grant Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins.  
We are witnesses of these things,  
as is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

The Sanhedrin ordered the apostles  
to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them.  
So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin,  
rejoicing that they had been found worthy  
to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name.

## Responsorial Psalm

**Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13**

**R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**  
I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew me clear  
and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.  
O LORD, you brought me up from the netherworld;  
you preserved me from among those going down into the pit.  
**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones,  
and give thanks to his holy name.  
For his anger lasts but a moment;  
a lifetime, his good will.  
At nightfall, weeping enters in,  
but with the dawn, rejoicing.  
**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me;  
O LORD, be my helper.  
You changed my mourning into dancing;  
O LORD, my God, forever will I give you thanks.  
**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

## **Reading 2**

### **Revelation 5:11-14**

I, John, looked and heard the voices of many angels  
who surrounded the throne  
and the living creatures and the elders.  
They were countless in number, and they cried out in a loud voice:  
"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain  
to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength,  
honor and glory and blessing."  
Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth  
and under the earth and in the sea,  
everything in the universe, cry out:  
"To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honor, glory and might,  
forever and ever."  
The four living creatures answered, "Amen, "  
and the elders fell down and worshiped.

## **Alleluia**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**  
Christ is risen, creator of all;  
he has shown pity on all people.  
**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

## **Gospel**

### **John 21:1-19**

At that time, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.  
He revealed himself in this way.  
Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus,  
Nathanael from Cana in Galilee,  
Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples.  
Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."  
They said to him, "We also will come with you."  
So they went out and got into the boat,  
but that night they caught nothing.  
When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore;  
but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

## Gospel (Continued)

Jesus said to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?"  
They answered him, "No."  
So he said to them, "Cast the net over the right side of the boat  
and you will find something."  
So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in  
because of the number of fish.  
So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord."  
When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord,  
he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad,  
and jumped into the sea.  
The other disciples came in the boat,  
for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards,  
dragging the net with the fish.  
When they climbed out on shore,  
they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread.  
Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught."  
So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore  
full of one hundred fifty-three large fish.  
Even though there were so many, the net was not torn.  
Jesus said to them, "Come, have breakfast."  
And none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?"  
because they realized it was the Lord.  
Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them,  
and in like manner the fish.  
This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples  
after being raised from the dead.

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."

## Exegesis

### Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41

When a selected pericope is presented with verses that are excluded it is important to investigate the missing verses. A portion of those verses are as follows:

*When they heard this, they became infuriated and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by the people, stood up, ordered the men to be put outside for a short time, and said to them, "Fellow Israelites, be careful what you are about to do to these men. Some time ago, Theudas appeared, claiming to be someone important, and about four hundred men joined him, but he was killed, and all those who were loyal to him were disbanded and came to nothing...*

*So now I tell you, have nothing to do with these men, and let them go. For if this endeavor of this activity is of human origin, it will destroy itself. But if it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them; you may even find yourself fighting against God."*

Gamaliel was an elder, the son of Hillel, who was perhaps the most respected Jewish scholar of the time. Saul was a student of Gamaliel who was teaching in Jerusalem in the years 25 – 50. The operative point that St. Luke is making here is that God is the founder of this new way in and through His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit is with them. The past two thousand years have proven him right.

Our passage today reveals the second major persecution that the apostles faced in Jerusalem. This is their second trial before the Sanhedrin council. The religious authorities appear to be moved primarily out of jealousy at the success of this new Christian movement.

The apostles are well aware of the opposition that they would face, and they have to recall the words of Jesus: "Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way." (Lk 6: 22-23).

How did the apostles respond? "And all day long, both at the temple and in their homes, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the Messiah, Jesus." (Acts 5: 42).

## Exegesis (Continued)

### Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13

Psalm 30 consists of thirteen verses, most of which have been selected for this liturgy. It is titled *Thanksgiving for Deliverance – A Psalm. A Song for the Dedication of the Temple. Of David*. There is evidence that this psalm was used during the rededication and purification of the Temple during the Maccabean persecution and the Revolt of 164.

Psalm 30 is an individual psalm of thanksgiving for deliverance from mortal illness. It is a lament of one who is threatened with death, is subsequently delivered from death, and responds with praise and thanksgiving to God. It also celebrates the joyful reintegration into the community of one who had been at the point of death and segregated from the community due to ritual impurity laws.<sup>1</sup>

The psalm rejoices in the saving and healing power of God. It is filled with thanksgiving and praise. The Hebrew word for *thanksgiving* is *yadah*. *Yadah* can be translated as either *thanksgiving* or *praise*. It speaks of an outward expression of gratitude.

Verse 5 is calling on the faithful to give thanks and praise as well. *Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name*. The Hebrew word for *praise* here is *zamire* which is the vocal expression of thanks and praise as in melodious song. The Hebrew word for *thanks* is *yadah*, the outward vocal expression of gratitude. The word *yadah* appears three times in this short psalm.

The psalm is soliciting the outward expression of gratitude to Yahweh.

---

1. Brown, Fitzmyer, Murphy; The New Jerome Biblical Commentary; P.H.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.; page 531.



## Exegesis (Continued)

### Revelation 5:11-14

Chapter five of *Revelation* is titled *The Lamb and the Scroll*. It begins: “Then I saw in the right hand of the One seated on the throne a scroll with writing inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice: ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’” (Rev 5: 1-2). Our pericope answers that question, the Lamb that was slain is the one.

God is seated on the throne and this passage echoes the vision of the Prophet Daniel with myriads of angels ministering to Him: “Thrones were set up and the Ancient One took his throne. His clothing was snow bright, and the hair on his head as white as wool; His throne was flames of fire, with wheels of burning fire. A surging stream of fire flowed out from where he sat; thousands upon thousands ministered to him and myriads upon myriads attended him.” (Dan 7: 9-10).

Throughout *Revelation* the throne of God and the throne of the Lamb are treated as one. In his closing vision John writes of heaven: “The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.” (Rev 22: 3).

The doxology in praise of God recalls the verses of 1 Chronicles: “Blessed may you be, O Lord, God of Israel our father, from eternity to eternity. Yours, O Lord, are grandeur and power, majesty, splendor, and glory. For all in heaven and on earth is yours; yours, O Lord, is the sovereignty; you are exalted as head over all.” (1 Ch 29: 11).

The scroll is a reference to the vision of Ezekiel: “Son of man, he then said to me, ‘feed your belly and fill your stomach with this scroll I am giving you.’ I ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. He said: ‘Son of man, go now to the house of Israel, and speak my words to them.’” (Ez 3: 3-4). John introduces the scroll in verse 3:5 as the book of life. Here, it is more likely God’s preordained plan for his world, to be revealed and carried through by the Lamb. The scroll is in God’s right hand. God is in control of the scroll and has power over it as it is in His right hand. Now the mission once given to Ezekiel for Israel is now expanded. The plan of God for His world, which begins to come into effect at the opening of the scroll, embraces the whole of God’s creation-in particular, the whole of humankind.<sup>2</sup>

## Exegesis (Continued)

### John 21:1-19

Our pericope today begins the Epilogue of John's Gospel. It is titled in most translations *The Resurrection Appearance in Galilee*. The first section of our passage is titled *The Appearance to the Seven Disciples*, and the last paragraph is titled *Jesus and Peter*.

There have been centuries of speculation as to why the apostles were fishing. Some assume that they resumed their previous lifestyle. Some scholars have suggested that the apostles may have been in shock from the gravity of their recent experiences. Perhaps they were simply hungry, and fishing was what they knew and the quickest means of attaining a meal for themselves. Matthew reports that the Risen Lord told Mary and Mary Magdalene to instruct His disciples to go to Galilee: "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." (Mt 28: 20). Perhaps they are responding to that directive from the Lord and are doing a little fishing while they wait.

This account reminds me of two previous experiences of the apostles, especially of Simon Peter. The first is the scene in Luke's Gospel where Simon and his brother Andrew were fishing all night, perhaps at the exact place on the Sea of Galilee, and similarly they had fished all night and caught nothing. Then at the instruction of Jesus they recast their nets in the early morning and experienced a miraculous catch of fish such that the nets were tearing. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were there with Simon on that occasion as well. That event three years prior enticed Simon and the others to follow Jesus. Recall the words of Jesus: "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." (Lk 5: 10).

The second previous experience that comes to mind is Peter around the charcoal fire. A few days prior, Peter was near a charcoal fire when he denied knowing Jesus three times. Now standing beside a charcoal fire once more he has the opportunity to take back those three denials. As John Shea puts it: "The food of his new life in being cooked on the fire of his old failures."<sup>3</sup>

There is much symbolism involved in the fishing story. The water of the Sea of Galilee is shallow, active and often murky. Bringing fish up from the darkness of the sea into the light of day is symbolic of coming to the light of faith. Jesus is on the shore, and we are told that the day is dawning. Darkness is turning into the light of day now that Jesus is present. With His presence and His instructions, they are able to bring the fish to the light of day. They could do with Him what they could not do without Him. They themselves come to the light of faith through the experience of the Risen Lord, who feeds them and commissions them to feed His lambs.

As the Risen Lord speaks directly to Peter, He is assuring him of the primacy of his role as the leader of the Church. He does not ask Peter whether he can handle the administration, effectively teach the faith, or preach the word. He asked him the same question three times. "Peter, do you love me?" The only requirement for this new job description is love!

---

3. Shea; *The Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospels for Christian Preachers and Teachers*; L.P.; Collegeville, MN; page 122.



## Reflection

Appropriately, on this the Third Sunday of Easter, our Gospel recounts the third time that the Risen Lord appeared to His disciples. I sense that there is something very significant in the numbers mentioned in this appearance story. Why does it matter that there were 153 large fish in the miraculous catch? Why did Jesus ask Peter three times if he loved Him?

St. Jerome, one of the Church Fathers and a great scholar of Sacred Scripture, says that there were 153 known species of fish at the time. Recalling the promise of Jesus at the first miraculous catch, "I will make you fishers of men," St. Jerome points out that the 153 fish represent all the people of the world. This emphasizes the fact that salvation and the Gospel message is for the whole world. In the Ascension scene Jesus says, "Go therefore, and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Mt 28: 19). In this miracle the Risen Lord reminds His disciples of their mission and in fact commissions them.

St. Jerome also mentions in his commentary that Jesus asked Peter three times so that he would have an opportunity to take back his three denials of Jesus during the Passion. St. Jerome first points to the charcoal fire. Why is this mentioned? He points out that Peter was warming himself over a charcoal fire as he was confronted by the crowd and denied three times that he even knew Jesus. Now they are back over a charcoal fire and Jesus asks the question three times, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter has the opportunity to tell Jesus three times that he loves Him.

Another question that came up during our recent scripture study session is, "Why does Jesus call Peter, Simon, son of John? When Jesus first looked at him He said, "You are Simon, son of John, from now on you will be called Cephas, (which is translated Peter)." (Jn 1:42). Standing on the rock of Caesarea Philippi Peter once proclaimed, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply. "Blessed are you, Simon son of John. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." (Mt 16: 17-18).

So why does Jesus revert to calling him Simon, son of John? Could it be that Jesus is reminding Peter of the necessity of remaining connected to the source of grace? Have you noticed that the only time that the disciples, fishermen by trade, ever catch any fish is when Jesus is with them and instructs them where to drop their nets? It was God who revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Messiah. Peter reluctantly allows Jesus to wash his feet at the Last Supper. Only after he allowed himself to be loved by Jesus is he capable of becoming a channel of that love. The Risen Lord commands Peter, "Feed My lambs," only after Jesus feeds him. Filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter becomes a new creation as he boldly proclaims the Risen Lord. Filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit Peter will live out his life faithfully following Jesus through the Cross into eternity. And now we, Christ's Church, must follow in Peter's large footsteps. Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of us Your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of Your love, Amen.

Yours in Christ,



## Personal Witness

This month I celebrate the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. Invariably as I have created homilies over the years, I have spent many hours in prayer in preparation. I always begin that prayer by asking God what He wants me to say. I ask Him to give me His words that He might speak to the people through me. The result of that prayer is that much of my preaching has been proclaiming God's amazing love. I feel that God wants me to tell people how much He loves them and tell them often. He wants everyone to know that it was He who chose them and not they who chose Him. He wants people to know that He does not want a world without them.

I have always known that God loved me, at least at an intellectual level. In my early adult life, I must confess that I did not experience God's love in my life. Looking back, I now realize just how far I had drifted from God. There is a common adage in spiritual jargon that says, if you don't feel God in your life, guess who moved. I "moved" by simply being preoccupied with worldly pursuits. As I strayed further and further from God my heart became hardened. Over time I had placed a protective shield around my heart such that I was not letting God in, or anyone else for that matter, and in someways even myself. In that emptiness I found myself existing and not really living.

There was something missing in my life, and I didn't know what it was. I was starving for love, authentic love. A dear Christian friend of mine saw in me what I could not see. He encouraged me to attend a Cursillo Retreat weekend. With a lot of prayers and his persistence I begrudgingly attended. For the first time in many years, I turned to God with all my heart. In a moment of Grace, the shield around my heart melted, the Holy Spirit rushed in, and I felt the embrace of God's love as never before in my life. It was like my life changed from a black and white movie to reality in high-definition technicolor. My life was changed forever. God's love was once again abiding in me.

That experience led me to kneel before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. My faith and my life became vividly clear to me. The entirety of our Catholic Faith is True. The promise of eternal life is real. I knew at that moment that I was to become a priest. It was something that I had not seriously considered before. It was like God was revealing to me my true calling, my true purpose and even my true identity.

My first reaction was, "Why me?" I was really questioning my worthiness. I remained awake all night thinking of reasons why I had no business being a priest. The words of Peter kept echoing in my mind, "Depart from me Lord I am a sinful man." While I was engaged in prayer, I repeatedly heard the words: "Glenn, do you love me?" The response of my heart was, "Yes Lord, you know I love you!" Then I heard the same words as Peter heard several times, "Come follow me."

Each one of us is being chosen, called, and sent by Jesus to bear fruit in our world. We are all a part of God's plan for the continued flow of His life and His love into creation. All things came into being and are sustained in being through Jesus, the Word made flesh. We are His body here on earth. He is the vine, and we are branches of that vine. Together we make up His Body, His Church. United to the source of all that is, we are united to all that is. This is the common union that we call Communion, abiding in Christ, abiding in the love chain. "Come follow me."

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Glenn".