

**Homily for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, 1<sup>st</sup> Communion, May 1, 2022**

**It is always worth repeating that the word “Gospel” is always appropriate. The Gospel is the Good News. It is always new. “God ever ancient, ever new.” If it seems old, it is because we have let this Old World grab hold of us. The Good News is always ready to make us new again.**

**We constantly rediscover this fact. Easter is always new. Easter is still fresh even though we are 2 weeks into the season. The Easter Message is not just a message, it is God breaking into our lives.**

**Our readings today overflow with this newness, this excitement, this freshness.**

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**Our First Reading from the acts of the Apostles may be about events after Pentecost. But then the Easter joy was brought to its fullness at Pentecost. For the Holy Spirit confirmed (made firm, strengthened) the Easter by empowering the Apostles to joyfully proclaim Christ no matter the cost.**

**This is something to recall concerning our own Confirmation, when the Holy Spirit Confirmed our Baptism – our entry into the Easter life.**

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**Again, the joy of Christ’s victory erupts in our Second Reading. Taken by itself, it reads as if it could be the last words of the bible, even though it is in the first quarter of the Book of Revelation. The culmination of God’s plan for all of us is presented with an energy that we normally associate with newness.**

**We hear described the joy, the harmony, and the fulness of zeal that all the created universe shows to God. And to Christ, who is identified in those words that recall His death and Resurrection.**

**“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing.”**

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**And now a few words about the Gospel Reading. Newness is a good description of all the times Jesus appears after His Resurrection. There is a difference about Him that even those closest to Him needed help recognizing Him. Often a meal is involved, as today. He is moving the Church toward the understanding that it is in the Eucharistic Meal that we will normally be encountering Him.**

**As this is our First communion weekend, it is appropriate that we hear His words:**

**“Children, have you caught anything to eat?”**

**And then He proceeds to feed them. For he will give himself to nourish and feed them. He feeds us still.**

**The Newness of Easter is given to Simon Peter, when Our Lord asks Peter three times if he loves Him – thus enabling Peter to reverse with his tongue what he did by denying Christ three times with his tongue when the going had gotten rough. And Jesus, in each case, entrusted Peter with the care of His flock. A fisherman turned into a shepherd.**

**I think this is very important to remember. Jesus earlier in John’s gospel emphasized that He has One Flock. From now on Christ will continue to care for that flock through Peter and his successors. We are all called to be members of Christ’s one flock. We are all called, then, to be joined to Peter and his successors.**

**All ministers of God’s people are entrusted to be shepherds, or “pastors.” If they are pastors, they are sharing in Peter’s job, in Peter’s duty. In which case they need to be linked to Peter. We are all called – if we love Jesus; to tend His flock, be a part of His flock, to follow Him, and to be cared for by Peter.**

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### **A few special words for all the First Communicants**

**How many sacraments are there? There are seven Sacraments. And one of them is - the Eucharist. First Communion is NOT one of the seven sacraments. You have been going to Mass, you have been at one of the Sacraments all this time.**

**You have been close to Jesus in the Mass. You, like me, are supposed to be at Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, whether you have been able to go to Communion or not. We may know people who cannot go to communion**

**right now. They still need to be close to Him – and so they come to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day.**

**But we always want to be even closer to Jesus than we are. And in Communion we can be as close to Jesus as possible until we are in heaven.**

**Today is a special day. We celebrate your First Communion. Today is the first time you can be even closer to Jesus than you have been so far. This is special because this is the FIRST time you can receive Him. It is my prayer, and the prayer of all of us, that each of you will be able to go to Communion often and regularly and for a long and healthy life.**

**Live in God. Do not sin. If you sin, go to Confession. Live so that you can go to Communion. Pray for those who cannot go to Communion at this time. Pray that they can also be this close to Jesus.**

**Today we read about Peter jumping out of the boat to swim to Jesus as fast as he could. In the same way, always run to Jesus. Always stay close to Jesus. Always let Him make you new.**