

At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face . . .

That's a familiar quote from a Letter of St. Paul that occasions our imagining today's Gospel reading as a mirror in which we may find our own face reflected in those of the actual characters in the story. Your reflection may be hard to perceive but the text demands that you make the effort – to catch a glimpse of who you *truly* are and what's been happening to you. And so to demonstrate what I mean, I choose to be Simon Peter, trying to get away from whatever my complicity in Christ's death may have been by spending a whole night lowering my nets into empty waters and coming up with no consolation whatsoever.

And yet now the sun begins to rise and my eyes catch sight of someone standing on the nearby shore – the current horizon of my life. Someone – not clearly visible but vocal, who calls, "Have you caught anything to eat – any nourishment from your labor?" And when I say "No" I am told by this stranger to cast my net to the alternative side of my boat – the deeper side out of which I find myself almost pulled overboard into the deep myself – what with the wealth of hope, of anticipation, of "sunrise" I experience.

And what dawns on me is that death is somehow not terminal, that so much of life can be drawn out of that deep, deep sea of Being! Seeing what I see, who that stranger is more clearly, I am ready to dive overboard, to swim a great distance to reach that unusual shore. To experience what? Breakfast – the breaking of my fast, feeling no longer so lonely but experiencing sociability as carefree and yet as caring as a picnic on a beach – an end to starving myself amid a complex world of frantic consumerism - but rather a world of gracious table manners within a cordially grounded community - no more discrimination.

All of which leads to the pièce de resistance: the revelation of that fundamental attribute of the Source of this universe; namely Love as what nourishes fullness of life – explosive of tombs that would bury us alive. And how does the risen Christ reveal this reality called Love? By way of a persistent interrogation: *Simon . . . Do you love me?* and again, *Simon, Do you love me?* and again, *Do you love me?*

And why does this risen Jesus ask me *three* times? Well, for one thing: his insistence requires that *I too insist* in my response – that I declare ever more strongly my commitment to love – that my faith no longer be mere lip service but resolute; that whereas when I was young I did whatever I pleased, henceforth I will stretch out my hands to be drawn into places, towards needs with which I would have once hesitated to be involved.

Which reminds me of the night when Jesus bent down to wash our feet – when he knew already that I would deny him *three times* to save my "life" – which I did - but who, upon this Sunday's threefold interrogation *Do you love me?* I am ready to reverse that dire prediction an *equivalent* three times!

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