



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 10, 2016

Introduction to the Word:



This is the second week of a message series for the Easter Season called “Ground-breaking”. It is a unique series for us because of its double meaning. First, in just a little over a month we are actually going to be breaking ground on a 1500sq. ft expansion which is part of our Generations campaign. This new space on to the front of our Church will connect and complete our campus and provide us with additional space for groups, activities and our growing Family of Faith. (See the drawings in Parish Centre). Second - we are in the Season which celebrates the most ground breaking event in history – Easter.

A ground breaking describes something that has never been seen or done or even thought of before - its pioneering. Usually it surprises and shocks and maybe shapes culture or redefines the way people live or work. Something ground breaking changes stuff....and certainly Easter was that..... it changed things.... it was groundbreaking - the impact is still being felt today

This first week we look at that heart of the ground-breaking of the Resurrection is the fact of its a new vision - one of Mercy. In this second week we take a look at Fear and how we can overcome it due to the Resurrection of Jesus by making three things a part of our life – the call to “feed, tend, go”

Warm-Up:

In today’s Gospel we hear the Apostles say “**It is the Lord!**” Discuss moments for you when you knew it was the Lord at work in your life, in the life of your family. These are examples of ground breaking!

Listen to this wonderful song by [JJ Week Band – “Alive in Me”](#). It will be a wonderful way to begin your small group gathering.

CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Leader: Today we are truly blessed to be able to say we believe, even though we have not seen.



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Lord Jesus, you call us to rejoice in the news of the Resurrection, **Lord, have mercy.**
Christ Jesus, you breathe on us the gift of the Holy Spirit, **Christ, have mercy.**
Lord Jesus, you are the Resurrection and the life, **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)

FIRST READING (Acts 5:28–32, 40–41)

In those days: The high priest questioned the Apostles, saying, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.” But Peter and the apostles answered, “**We must obey God rather than any human authority.** The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.” Then the council ordered the apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. As they left the council, they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of the name.
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (Revelation 5:11–14)

I, John, looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, “**Worthy is the Lamb** that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!”
Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, “To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!” And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshipped. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (John 21:1–19)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in



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Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon **Peter** said to them, “**I am going fishing.**” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “**It is the Lord!**” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about ninety metres off. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. **Jesus** said to them, “**Come and have breakfast.**” Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was 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?**” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the 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. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God. After this Jesus said to him, “**Follow me.**”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)

COMMENTARY:

[Feel free as a group to listen once again to the Lord's Day Message](#)



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(Image: Christ appears on the shore of Lake Tiberias by James Tissot)

In the Gospel, we continue from the introduction above, after the Apostles recognized Jesus, **“It is the Lord!”** Jesus has some unfinished business to clear up with Peter. After Jesus was arrested, Peter (fearful of being arrested) cursed and swore, and three times denied that he did not know Jesus. “I do not know him!” So Jesus asked him three times **“Peter, do you love me more than these?”** The word **‘these’** is not clear. It could mean **‘these’** fishing boats and nets’. Are you willing to leave these worldly things behind, and follow me? (as in any call to the Priesthood and Religious Life?) Or it could mean **‘these’** other Apostles’. Peter humbly answered, **“Yes Lord, you know that I love you.”** And Jesus answered three times **“Feed my lambs (sheep).”** Jesus confirms the Call of Peter, the “Rock”, who now holds the keys to the Kingdom of God, to be in charge of his fellow Apostles (bishops) and the people of God (the Church). These triple questions relate to Peter’s triple denial of Jesus.

After Peter confirms three times, “Yes Lord, You know that I love you!” Jesus said, “Follow me!” We often need to confirm our call to follow Jesus, “Here I am Lord. I come to do your Will!”

In this “year of Mercy” Pope Francis reminds us that Jesus is not so much interested in our sins, but in our knowing that **we have a loving and merciful Father**. Is this love mutual? This is the single most important question any lover can ask of the one loved. Peter’s “Yes” empowered him to build God’s Church. Do *we* hear the question? Do *we* have a response? Do we bring God’s love and mercy to others? Remember, God works through us.



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Mercy – or *Misericordia* - is derived from two Latin words - miserere (pity or misere) and cor (heart). When we ask for God’s mercy we are essentially asking God to relieve us of a heart that is in misery, and our heart can be in misery not just because of sin, but from the deep hurt caused by a broken relationship with a family member, from physical or mental illness, from losing a job, being betrayed, used or abandoned from spiritual or physical poverty

If we think of Mercy as being relieved from a heart of misery - than each of us has experienced Mercy a lot more than we think. Mercy paves the way for peace with self, with others, with God. Mercy roots us in peace. A peace that comes from within. A peace that comes from Him and is founded on His principles. Without this peace we live as people of judgement, we live as people who are self-absorbed, we live lives that are self centered and we live without happiness or joy.

But each day in our life there can be moments without happiness or joy. Life is filled with many difficulties and challenges that cause us to be fearful. Each day we are confronted with many events that may cause us to become apprehensive. Going to a new school; starting a new job; having to take the car in for repairs on the busiest day of the week; dealing with a computer virus; missing an important deadline at work; getting laid off from work; coping with a child's sudden illness; these are just some of the many things that happen each day that may cause us to be filled with fear, sick with apprehension. And sometimes, when the pain is deep and real we can even be tempted to ask “Does God love me?”

When Jesus and Peter dialogued about it (Gospel), the Resurrected Lord knew the heart of a fragile Peter who was dealing with the confusion of everything in his life now that Jesus had died and this ground-breaking story of the resurrection did not yet make sense. So Jesus says - when Fear is a Factor don’t ask if God loves me - but rather get out of the board and be someone who show love for God. Jesus says - if you love Him - then we must be people who **FEED, TEND, GO**

Feed – The Eucharist is the place where we are fed. In His Body and Blood, Jesus becomes food for our journey. This food (Himself) carries us and nourishes us in the moments when we question the plan, purpose or providence that is before us. This is why embracing the Eucharist weekly on the Lord’s Day is so vital. This is also why we should not be shy about inviting others to be with us at Mass, and even embracing the fact that our presence (and witness) to each other at Mass by weekly attendance is a powerful and encouraging!

Tend – To tend is to care for. We need to be people who tend to one another. Who care for one another. Small groups are a way of doing this, but our small groups must not be cliques of exclusive care, but always remain intimate and inviting. Small groups should also be on the same page as the wider parish – not doing their own thing – but connected to the community which gathers on the Lord’s Day. Likewise, we tend by reaching out – Ministers of Communion to the Sick, Ministry of Compassion, Neighbourhood Ministry – are all ways in our parish we care for others in their moment of need.



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Go – We are about being called and sent. Haiti, Kenya, Toronto, Hamilton – but also go and witnessing in our school, office, gym, grocery store, library and even the waiting line. These are all missionary fields where we can make a difference. Do we?

But here is the ground breaking reality! If we feed tend, go....then we also begin to live as people without fear!

- If we are being **Fed by God** - then we are trusting Him and fear is not a factor- ground breaking
- If we are **Tending to Others** then we are less prone to be focussed on self - ground breaking
- **If we go** to our mission field is not just Haiti, Hamilton and Toronto - but people in your workplace, neighbourhood and school - and invest and invite in them - we tend to be less about what we can't do and more about what God is doing - ground breaking

Focus not on Fear but rather Concentrate on being a people feed tend, go...

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion: (15-20 minutes)

- ▶ What one thing struck you the most about this story?
- ▶ In what way can you relate to the “big catch” in your life?
- ▶ Have you ever had the experience in which every effort came up short, dead-ends were experienced at every turn, nothing seemed to work out, only to find that waiting for the Lord to show the way opened doors you never thought possible? What did you learn from the experience?
- ▶ Consider the possibility that Jesus is asking you to lower your nets. What fish might he be asking you to catch--perhaps a spouse, a loved one, a co-worker, a group? What do you need from Jesus in order to catch the fish? What obstacles stand in the way?
- ▶ What struck you about the Peter segment of this story? Where is the good news for you?
- ▶ In what way might Jesus be asking you to lower your nets? What fish might He be asking you to catch? Who might He be asking you to help feed, tend and go toward?

Intercessions:

Leader: Baptized in the one Spirit into the one body, we pray for those who, with us, are members of Christ and for all the human family. **The response is: The Lord is kind and merciful.**



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That as the universal church encounters the Risen Lord throughout this Easter season it will be transformed so as to become a true herald of the Resurrection to the world, we pray to the Lord ..

That the gentle touch of the Risen Lord's peace may touch all parts of our world, bringing an end to war, violence and injustice in all its forms, especially in our parish missions in Haiti and Kenya...we pray to the Lord ...

For all the young people preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation who will be on retreat this weekend, may they experience the fullness of Christ's love and they are sent to feed, tend and go, we pray to the Lord ...

For all the newly initiated, may the joy of new life they experienced at the Easter Vigil continue to touch their lives, and forever inspire them to announce the Resurrection to the world, we pray to the Lord ...

May the Resurrection we celebrate and proclaim be given to all those who have died and gone before us in faith, we pray to the Lord ...

Leader: Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray: [Hail Mary](#)

Closing Activity and Prayer (15-20 minutes)

(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. This time also intent to provide moments to connect and "outreach" to the larger community.)

GROUP PRAYER/ ACTION:

St Patrick Parish in downtown Hamilton offers a food kitchen and outreach for between 125 - 150 a day, seven days a week. They have reached out to us as a dynamic parish in our Diocese asking for a donations of the following – would your small group consider collecting some of these items and donating them to this as an Act of Mercy in this Year of Mercy as we seek to help the poor and disadvantaged in Hamilton. Collect and donate cans of coffee, sugar, bottled water, pop or chocolate bars... It might sound a bit “unhealthy” menu, but precisely that’s what our patrons need as many of them deal with many different forms of addiction and mental health issues. These can be placed in the Adoration Chapel Hallway – mark them “Hamilton.”

Let us pray (together)

*God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead,
for He is alive and has become the Lord of life.*

From the waters of death you raise us with him and renew your gift of life within us.

*Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ
and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you.*

We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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