

Third Weekend of Easter (C/RCL): First Holy Communion/“Breakfast on the Beach”  
John 21:1-19  
May 4-5, 2019  
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Manasquan, NJ

- Who’s ever had breakfast on the beach?
- What did you have? (I’ve had pork roll, egg and cheese on the sand, but for lunch not breakfast 😊.)

Listen to this description of breakfast close-to-the-beach from one of C.S. Lewis’

Chronicles of Narnia, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*:

The children [Lucy and Edmund] got out of the boat and waded... They never felt tired. The water was warm and all the time it got shallower. At last they were on dry sand, and then on grass – a huge plain of very fine short grass, almost level with the Silver Sea and spreading in every direction without so much as a molehill.

And of course, as it always does in a perfectly flat place without trees, it looked as if the sky came down to meet the grass in front of them. But as they went on they got the strangest impression that here at last the sky did really come down and join the earth – a blue wall, very bright, but real and solid: more like glass than anything else. And soon they were quite sure of it. It was very near now.

But between them and the foot of the sky there was something so white on the green grass that even with their eagles’ eyes they could hardly look at it. They came on and saw that it was a Lamb.

“Come and have breakfast,” said the Lamb in its sweet milky voice.

Then they noticed for the first time that there was a fire lit on the grass and fish roasting on it. They sat down and ate the fish, hungry now for the first time for many days. And it was the most delicious food they had ever tasted.<sup>1</sup>

Does that sound at all familiar?? Our Gospel today is perfect for this First Holy Communion weekend! Now is just the right time and we live in just the right place to really appreciate this story!

- Who are the characters in the story?
  - Jesus
  - Simon Peter (who denied Jesus the night He was arrested!)
  - Thomas called the Twin (also called the Doubter!)

- Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee (who asked, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth??” John 1:46)
- 2 others, including the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:7)
- So what happens in the story?
  - Jesus’ friends are fishing all night.
  - Just after sunrise they see someone on shore but don’t recognize it’s Jesus. How come??
  - Jesus asks, “Children [lads], you have no fish, have you?”
  - They answer, probably disgustedly, “No....”
  - Jesus tells them to throw the net into the sea off the right side of the boat.
  - They do, and catch so many fish they can’t even lift the net back in the boat!
  - Jesus’ closest friend (points to shore and) yells, “It’s the Lord!”
  - And Peter jumps into the water and swims to land!
  - The others row ashore (I don’t know who beat whom!) and find Jesus on the beach tending a charcoal fire and grilling fish to go with the bread He’s brought. He asks for the some of the fish they just caught and adds them to the grill. [The only other time a charcoal fire shows up in the New Testament is earlier in St. John’s Gospel when he describes one in the high priest’s courtyard, around which the police, servants and Peter warm their hands while Jesus is being tried inside. It’s near that fire that Peter denies knowing the Lord. John 18:18]
  - Jesus invites the friends who now recognize Him, “Come and have breakfast.” He **takes the bread** and **gives it to them**, then the fish. **Remind you of anything??**
  - After they eat, Jesus asks Peter,
    - “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” (John 21:15)

**Why does Jesus ask Peter that?** Not just once. Three times. And Peter answers twice,

- “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” (John 21:15, 16)

Then:

*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.” (John 21:17)*

How does the Lord know that **we** love Him?

- **We obey Him like His friends did.**

He said, “Cast the nets to the right side of the boat” and they did. He said, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught” and they did. “Come and have breakfast.” (That was an easy one to obey!) And to Peter: “Feed my lambs... Tend my sheep... Feed my sheep.” And Peter did that. **What does the Lord command us? “Take and eat. Do this to remember Me.” “Take and drink. Do this to remember Me.”** And not just on First Holy Communion Day. As often as you can! One of the commandments our Lord knew and obeyed was “Remember the Sabbath. Keep it holy.” Devote time to worshiping God in community. Not just on the days when it’s hard to find parking and there’s not a lot of wing room in the pews. Every week.

- **We show our Lord we love Him by loving His Word and by loving His Supper!**

I don’t read His Word I obviously don’t love it, and if I don’t receive His Supper I obviously don’t love it. My Jesus comes to me in Holy Communion! I love that! Your Jesus comes to you in Holy Communion! Love that! Most of you don’t live close enough to walk, so you need your family to drive you here. Ask them to bring you here to obey the Lord’s command and accept His invitation: “Do this to remember Me. Take and eat! Take and drink!” We’re closer to Jesus in Holy Communion than we are any other time, in any other way, in our whole lives. He said, “This is My Body. This is My Blood.” There’s no more precious gift than our Lord’s presence in this blessed Bread and Wine. He comes to me and becomes part of me. He loves **me** that much. He loves **you** that much. Do we love Him enough to make time to come and receive the Gift He offers, not just weeks when there’s Sunday School, but every week?? “If you love Me, you will obey My commandments.”

When He comes in this Holy Supper our Lord forgives me, feeds me, makes me strong to tell others who don't recognize Him, "It is the Lord!" When I'm sad He hugs me and when I'm glad He jumps up and down with me and when I'm being selfish He reminds me that many blessings are sent my way to share with others. And when I don't recognize Him He sends His Holy Spirit to open the eyes of my heart to see and serve Him in the ones who cross my path, especially the poorest or sickest or loneliest ones. My Jesus has these gifts to give you because He is your Jesus, too. May you **always** be hungry and thirsty for Him in this holy Supper! Show your love for Him by accepting the Gift He wants to give you. Amen

<sup>1</sup>C.S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (NY: HarperTrophy, 1994), pp. 267-268.

Pastor Mary Virginia Farnham