
Stay Connected – Sunday 4th May

Third Sunday of Easter

This Week's Reading

Bible Reading: John 21.1–19

Peter's Blurb

Well, if last week's service was a relief from the frenzy of Holy Week then this week was definitely a step back from the grandeur of last week's Easter Sunday service. Nothing hugely exciting on which to report except perhaps the anticipation of the forthcoming visit next Sunday (11th May) of His Excellency the Governor Andrew Murdoch. Regrettably I shall miss his visit as I shall be away next weekend. Coming from a military family, as I do, I am sure I would have found him interesting on many levels.

The story in today's reading from John was rich in imagery as Jesus took the disciples on a post-Resurrection fishing expedition. Fr. Gav analysed the text carefully and identified each of the many passages on which he felt he would have been able to preach today's sermon. Dudley and I nodded sagely to each other, and agreed that "Yes, he could. That would make a good topic for a sermon". But! So many were the possible passages embedded in the text, however, any of which could have been built into a sermon that, by the time the mooted was done, so, effectively, was the sermon! An excellent example of "ad hoc spontaneous sermon generation". Very clever! Very gifted!

The important news is that St. Mark's will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, 18th May – that's two Sunday's hence, i.e. de Sunday arter next, in the Parish Hall following the 9.30 a.m. service. This is the most important event in the church year as we hear what and how we have done over the past year and what and how we hope and plan to do over the year ahead. We thank those members of Vestry at the end of their statutory term of office or otherwise standing down and elect replacements to fill those vacant positions. We also use the opportunity to discuss matters pertaining to the management and running of the church. See you there!

Agendas and reports will have been circulated to member well in advance of the meeting so please do your homework, read and digest all the reports, and arrive at the meeting with your questions ready to ask or fresh ideas to offer. It surely beats reading all the reports into the record the way it was done "beck in de day". We are all in this together and we all have something to contribute for which we need to be informed ♥

Come to St. Mark's – not just a Church but a family!

Peter

Fr. Gav's Talk

Fr. Gav's talk can be watched, listened to or read here:

<https://anglican.bm/what-can-we-learn-from-peter/>

Here is the text for our off-line readers:

[John 21.1–19](#)

Today's Bible reading is the story of the resurrected Jesus meeting the disciples on the shores of the Sea of Tiberius (the Sea of Galilee). I have preached from this story many times — and yes, it is my favourite Bible story

P.O. Box FL 239 • Flatts FLBX • Bermuda

Tel: +1 (441) 236-8360 • rector@stmarks.bm • office@stmarks.bm • pastoral@stmarks.bm

featuring my two favourite things, fishing and breakfast!

Therefore, do I focus on the miraculous catch of fish that as a sign, echoing that first miraculous catch we read about in Luke Chapter 5, where Simon Peter falls on his knees and follows Jesus?

The disciples had been night-sweating the nets, fishing all night, when a stranger called out in a loud voice, “Hey kids, have you caught anything?” If there’s one thing us anglers love it’s when we’ve caught something and we’re asked that question! And if there’s one thing us anglers hate it’s if we’ve not caught anything and we’re asked that question! Let me give you a little tip, if you’re gonna take your life into your own hands and ask an angler if they’ve caught anything, rephrase the question and make it about the fish, for example, “Are the fish biting today?” Then, it’s the fishes fault if the angler hasn’t caught anything!

The disciples shouted back, “No”, and if I may be so bold as to read into the story, it was a proper, grumpy, “No!” However, being true fishermen, there was always time for one more cast, and so they let down their nets only to snag a huge haul of fish. History was repeating itself, and even though this stranger was standing on the shore a hundred yards away, surely it was no coincidence. It was a sign. The stranger had called them ‘children’. Was he being cheeky or speaking to something deeper about his relationship with them? Either way, the huge haul could only mean one thing — the stranger was Jesus.

And what does Peter do? Impetuous Peter. The Peter who first ran to the empty tomb. The Peter who said, “Don’t only wash my feet but all of me.” The Peter who drew a sword and went for the guards coming to arrest Jesus. The Peter who spoke out saying Jesus would never be killed and received a harsh rebuke. The Peter, who when filled with the Holy Spirit would be first to boldly proclaim the good news. This Peter, puts on his cloak, dives off the boat, and swims to shore to end up standing, dripping in front of Jesus. His actions are an example and reminder to us, to lose our inhibitions and drop everything for a chance to be with our Saviour.

Perhaps, I should focus on the wonderful piece of pastoral ministry where Jesus asked Simon Peter to bring some of the fish he had caught, valuing what Simon Peter, quite literally, brings to the table — a reminder of how God values our own contributions?

The disciples brought in the boat, towing the net full of fish behind them, and Simon Peter ran back to help haul the net onto the beach. He took a couple of the fish and brought them back to Jesus. I love that Jesus already had a charcoal fire going. I love that he had baked some bread for them to share. He had planned to have breakfast with them *before* he called out to them. He had spent time making the fire, preparing the dough, and preparing some of his own fish to BBQ. Only when it was cooking did he stand up, walk to the shoreline and call out to the boat out on the water.

And then I love that he asked Simon Peter to bring some of the fish they’d caught — these special fish, the fish that were to be a sign of the people for whom Simon Peter would go on to ‘fish’ — bringing them into God’s kingdom. Not only was Jesus’ invitation for Peter to bring some of the fish a tangible sign or symbol of Simon Peter’s future vocation, but it was also pastoral work, setting a scene for Peter to know that his contribution was valued and that he, himself was valued. This story is a reminder to us that, although God doesn’t *need* us, God loves us and values us the contributions we bring.

Perhaps, instead, I should focus on the reinstatement of Simon Peter, where he is asked three times whether he loves Jesus, an echo of the three denials Simon Peter made on the night of Jesus’ arrest?

Surely it was no coincidence that Simon Peter was asked, three times, if he loved Jesus? Jesus had predicted that three times, before the cock crowed, Simon Peter would deny knowing him. Peter, who swore and spat and tore his own clothes and acted with disgust at being associated with Jesus of Nazareth. Can you imagine the shame he felt as he now confronted the one he had so verbally and and publicly decried and disassociated?

Three times Peter had rejected Jesus and now, after sitting and chatting and eating over breakfast, Jesus would take him to one side and get down to the real business. Sure, Simon Peter didn’t need to assert his love three times. Once would be enough, but having three opportunities to make it right meant there could be no doubt that he was back on an even keel and that nothing in his past had been left undone. Now, Peter could move forward, unfettered by his past mistakes.

This story is a reminder of how we too are forgiven through the resurrection of Christ, and how like Peter, we are made right with God and enabled to make a fresh start.

Hmmm. Perhaps I should instead focus on the different words used for love where, twice, Jesus asks if Peter can love him with an 'agape' divine love but then agrees that Simon Peter's 'philia' friendship love is enough?

You see, in Greek and Hebrew there are four words for love. There is agape love which is a perfect divine love, philia love which is a friendship or sisterly love, storge which is a parental love, and eros which is an erotic or intimate love. When Jesus asked Peter if he loved him, the first two times he asked Peter if he could love him with a perfect, divine love, to which Peter replied that he loved Jesus with a friendship love, but the third time Jesus asked Peter if he loved him with a friendship love, and Peter (although feeling naturally hurt at this point) replied again that yes, he loved Jesus with a friendship or brotherly love.

You see, none of us can love God as God loves us. God's love is perfect and divine. It never falters, wavers, or ebbs. It is not based on feelings, worth, or merit. It is consistent and unconditional. But God only asks us if we can love God as best we can, that if we love God with a 'human' philia love, then that is enough. Our love does falter, waver, and ebb. It does often depend on our feelings, our sense of self worth, or our merit. It is often inconsistent and conditional, but, and this is the important bit, this is okay. God asks nothing more of us than to bring what love we are able. For those of us who find expressing love difficult, perhaps because we are shy or have been hurt or have hearts that have yet to be broken open, God says that this is okay. All we are asked to do is love God as best we can.

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Yes, this story of Jesus' resurrection is a rich seam indeed! But it is also a story about one man, Simon Peter, and through him we see ourselves reflected in the story — a story where we drop everything to be with Jesus, discover that Jesus values us and the contributions we bring, that through his resurrection we are forgiven and can make a fresh start, and that our love, however flawed, is enough.

Amen.

From the Distaff Side

Helen's Talk –Dedication

In today's Bible story you are going to hear how some of the disciples had been out in the boat all night, yet had still not managed to catch any fish. If you live with anybody who fishes you will understand their pain. Despite your dedication to the job at hand, if the fish aren't biting, you'll come home empty handed. I like to remind Gav that it's called 'fishing' not 'catching'. But, just like the disciples in the story if you keep on working at it, eventually you'll be successful. It's like learning to ride a bike, or drive a car. It takes dedication, commitment, staying power, use any synonym you like, but some things are worth working hard for to achieve.

Last weekend I was reminded of the receptionist at the office my dad ran back in the late seventies/early eighties. The receptionist was blind, but had dedicated countless hours to learning how to use the switchboard. This was back when calls were transferred by taking out the jack plug for the incoming call and pushing it into the correct extension. Remember that the receptionist was blind. She had memorised the extension numbers for everyone working in the office, AND she knew exactly where they sat on the switchboard. If I ever needed to contact my dad at work I'd phone through to Norma, and she always put me through to the right line. Dedication.

Norma had a Guide dog, and normally they are trained to have the utmost dedication to their owners. Norma's dog was only dedicated to food. One day, the dog wriggled out from under the switchboard desk and visited all the offices, stealing everybody's lunch as he went. On another occasion Norma took the dog for his usual lunchtime walk in the nearby park. The dog spotted a family with a picnic, and he was off, leaving poor Norma stranded! The dog was dedicated to the wrong thing, and had to retire and go and live on a farm.

This week, think about your strengths, your talents, your gifts. How can you use them to help those around you? Be resolute, committed, devoted, unwavering, faithful, diligent, staunch...be dedicated and you will make a difference.

In our prayers

We ask for your prayers for Father Don, Margaret Blanchette, Al Spearing, Gill Rossiter, Sam & Marjorie, Phyllis, Gwyneth & Ralph, Jill, Barbara (Dyer), Vinette, Marianne, Nancy, Gail, Janet & Gary, Tina, Val & Mark, Robert & Kalreeta and for Charles & Sue. We also ask for special prayers for all members of the congregation who are travelling this week.

This Sunday



Fr. Gav's talk can be watched, listened to or read here:

<https://anglican.bm/what-can-we-learn-from-peter/> Previous services and other videos are on our YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda> and/or our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>

Next Sunday

Next Sunday, 11th May – There will be 8.00 am Peaceful Worship and our All-Ages Service will be held at the usual 9.30 am. There will be Junior Church and services will be led by Fr. Gavin.

- **Bereavement Support Tea** – our next monthly chat will take place at **3.00 p.m. on Sunday, 1st June** in the Parish Hall;
- **Annual General Meeting** – St. Mark's will be holding its Annual General Meeting on **Sunday, 18th May** following Family Worship. Agenda and Reports will be circulated to members in advance.
- **Vendor's Market** – The next Vendor's Market will be held on **Saturday, 31st May**;

Down the Debt – St. Mark's needs your help in reducing the size of our debt which inhibits future investment in our church. If you feel you may be able to help with this please go to <https://stmarks.bm/donate/> where you will find details and an opportunity to donate.

Links:

Just a reminder – if you want to check vot's happnin' or vot's comin' dahn de road – you can find it all at our:

- **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>
- **YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda>
- **Website:** <https://anglican.bm/churches/st-marks/>
- **Holy Trinity Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitychurchbda>

End Stuff:

Here's a thought. It is always a great time for us all to review our pledging. If each of us is able to increase our pledge by 10% that would be a great boost to our cash flow (which as you know is tenuous at best). And, with our in-person collections still inhibited by numbers restrictions, please consider the opportunity to convert to pledging by Direct Deposit (see below). Your support is vital.

As always, another huge thank you to all of you who continue to support our church family with your pledges and donations via online transfer.

Direct deposits can be made to: Butterfield Bank for the account of:

St. Mark's Church Wardens – A/c No. 20-006-060-104125-100.

- **For Pledge Envelope donations** – if you already have a Pledge envelope number just be sure to enter your Name and Env # e.g. "Nash Env 190" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.
- **For Grave Payments** – when paying Grave Maintenance fees be sure to enter Grave Number and Name of Lessee e.g. "Grave 273 Peter Nash" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.

- **For Cash donations** – if you do not have an Envelope # just be sure to also enter your Name and “Donation” e.g. “Nash Donation” in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.

Use of the “Beneficiary” space is IMPORTANT – it is the only way we have to identify who is paying and for what.

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