

North Main Sermon April 19, 2026 - Third Sunday of Easter

Gospel: Luke 24:36 - 44.

This is Luke's Reading of **“Jesus Appears to the Disciples”**

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴ He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Our Second Reading from Gospel of John 21: 1-14

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.^[a] It happened this way: ² Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus^[b]), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. ³ “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. ⁴ Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. ⁵ He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.

⁶ He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

⁷ Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. ⁸ The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.^[c] ⁹ When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

¹⁰ Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” ¹¹ So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

THE WORD OF GOD...

In our readings for today, we need to recognize that many of us need hope in our lives, now more than ever. We have received that Hope in Jesus resurrection. In John’s Gospel again today, we get to explore the responses of the disciples to the message of his resurrection. At the end of Luke’s Gospel, Peter and the other disciples are discouraged and feel alienated, abandoned by Jesus. Peter knows all too well that he denied Jesus three times, just as Jesus predicted he would. We, like the disciples feel sometimes that we lose hope also.

In Luke 23:49, the scene is summarized like this: “But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance.” Jesus was entirely alone—all had fled, or at least had kept their distance out of fear and shame. Few people truly want to recognize their own mortality. But most of the people were curious about what happened to Jesus’ body on Easter. Luke speaks concretely to that curiosity. He insists that after the resurrection, Jesus’ body was totally new and different. He could appear inside a locked room, but was not a ghost. He had skin the disciples could touch, and his body functioned in some of the old ways for example, he could eat, and it still bore the crucifixion wounds. His friends recognized him by the way his body looked. Jesus’ resurrected body was unique, something totally new

and different. Those who recognize his witness become witnesses themselves. They put their bodies on the line. They become contagious with the forgiveness they've caught, carriers of resurrection. The Disciples truly needed to know that the Jesus who walked through closed doors was the same Jesus they had followed and loved. After his crucifixion, the disciples of Jesus were trying to sort out the meaning of the reports they had been receiving about appearances of the risen Christ. It was confusing to them. Suddenly it happened. Jesus himself stood among them. The disciples were startled and frightened. Then Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubled and why do questionings rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.... They just needed to see and touch and know that he was the savior they knew. Luke tells us that they "disbelieved for joy..." It was simply too wonderful to be true. He was alive and he was with them right there. No wonder they had difficulty believing. The Gospels are filled with stories of the disciples being, in a sense, reborn and becoming more Christlike than they could have ever imagined.

When the resurrected Jesus appeared to the disciples, their trust was completed as their potential for confident living and eternal life was assured. That's why Jesus said, "Look at my hands and feet . . . Touch me and see." The disciples could not understand the scriptures until they witnessed the fact that he rose from the dead.

In our readings today, the risen Jesus appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee, after Peter and others returned to their old profession of fishing. The first result of Peter's decision was that others joined him. We can see now that Peter is a leader. **They went out and got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, "Men, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."** He instructed them to cast their net on the right side of the boat, resulting in a massive catch. Jesus was not looking for them to tell him about fishing. He knew that they had not caught anything. His question demanded their honesty and confronted their poverty. He wanted them to recognize and acknowledge their insufficiency. They saw a fire of coals there on the beach, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three according to the Scriptures; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to

them, “Come *and* eat .” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?” - knowing that it was the Lord. What an invitation! Jesus invites them into intimate fellowship with Him. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This *is* now the third time Jesus showed Himself to **His disciples after He was raised from the dead**. Jesus then hosted breakfast on the shore, featuring a charcoal fire, bread, and fish. This is the third appearance Jesus made to the disciples after his resurrection. **The two previous times they saw Jesus it was in Jerusalem where He had died and rose again. The first appearance was when the disciples were in hiding—without Thomas; and the second was with Thomas present. That’s why John closes this section in John 21:14 by saying this present story is the third of His appearances to His disciples as a group after He was raised from the dead.** Jesus met them each time to turn their focus back to their new mission, and from today’s reading we know that He is specifically calling Peter to lead them in their mission.

We too, like the first disciples, cannot understand the scriptures until our minds have been opened by our experience with him, and by our faith in his resurrection. Jesus’ urgency in this brief time he has yet on earth is to help his disciples and apostles understand his bodily resurrection and his place within the scriptural heritage, because it’s vital to their ability to carry on his mission.

When we’re getting down sometimes like the disciples did after Jesus’ death, we must remember the gospel. We must remember Jesus. We must remember how he conquered death and assured the same for you and me through faith. We must remember his resurrected greeting to the disciples, which is the experience of all who trust in him: “Peace be with you”.

The Risen Lord comes back to life... and assures the disciples that they are forgiven. · Peter had denied his Lord three times. · Thomas had doubted. · All the disciples had forsaken Him. But, Christ came back, forgave them, resurrected them. He came back to share with them. The resurrection of Jesus, throughout the years has been critically examined, judged by authorities, and editorialized by writers. We would do well to gather our memories around things we can touch, but we know that he will sustain us as we journey forward, hand in hand and He is listening to our prayers.

As I said in the beginning of our service ..today is Native Americans Day.

When the Pilgrims harvested their first crop of corn, beans, and cabbages that first fall in 1621 and shared them with the Native Americans, this is a conclusion we can make for ourselves. This is what God wants us to do also. This is the resurrection story. He does not want us to hide in fear as the disciples did. He wants us to ask ourselves what have we done and what can we do to make things better for everyone. What can we share today and in the remaining days of Eastertide with others in the form of food, clothing, gifts, talents and prayers.

Let us Pray - In unison - turn in your hymnal to page 329 -- Prayer to the Holy Spirit