

# Sunday Homily

## 3rd SUNDAY OF EASTER

1 MAY 2022

YEAR C

“It is the Lord!”

John 21:7

### Illustration

During the Second World War, a soldier said goodbye to his wife and two children to rejoin his regiment overseas. They were heartbroken at having to part. She promised to write every day to keep him in touch with what she and the children were doing. He agreed to do likewise when circumstances permitted, but asked her to remember that in whatever she was doing he would be there with her, and to look forward to his homecoming.

Weeks went by with the wife writing letters containing the days’ activities and details of the children’s development. She included thoughts and feelings and decisions to be made, asking his opinion, including him as a part of each day. She lived by faith that he would receive them and occasionally she received a reply reassuring her of their continued closeness and of their being reunited.

One day, after the usual queuing and shopping for essentials, she was travelling home on the double-decker bus with the children, plus bags and pushchair, wondering how she would manage everything, when down the stairs came her husband, completely unexpectedly. He had been given forty-eight-hour leave without prior notice. She was speechless and rooted to the spot, unable to believe her eyes. Later she told him how often she had imagined him there, involved in her ordinary daily activities, so much so that when he appeared it had seemed like a trick of her imagination. But the sense of his “presence” even during his absence was what had kept her going.

### Gospel Teaching

In today’s Gospel we hear how Jesus appears to his friends in one of their old familiar haunts, the Sea of Tiberias, while they are fishing, albeit not very successfully. Imagine their shock at seeing their beloved Lord in such mundane surroundings.

They knew Jesus was risen from the dead because they had been with him and had been commissioned for their ministry, but who would have expected the risen Lord to appear there? The disciple Jesus loved recognised the stranger on the shore and precipitated impulsive Peter to hurl himself into the water rather than wait for the boat to land. We are not told how the other disciples responded – probably like the soldier’s wife: delighted that old times seemed to have returned, even if for only a brief time, some comforting familiarity in the midst of tragedy and uncertainty.

The disciples had seen their new life's work all but destroyed when he was crucified, and then partially restored at the resurrection. Jesus wanted to reassure them, and what better way than by appearing in the context they knew best and in the actions of a loving Lord? He had fed thousands during his ministry; now he was feeding them. He was no apparition, but their Lord who could sit and eat with them. Even his commissioning of Peter to continue the leadership of his new movement took place in these humble surroundings. Jesus always took people exactly how they were and wherever he found them, and he still does.

## Application

It is crucial to remain in close touch with those who are important to us to maintain the relationships. Our relationship with God is no different. This will be nurtured by frequent prayerful references during our ordinary daily round and especially through regular worship together.

We also find God through our contact with other people, in our work with and for them; in the application of Jesus' teaching throughout every aspect of our lives and the daily events which seem to us so very ordinary. When we act like Christ we bring him into our lives in a powerful and effective way. He comes to us in many guises: the refugee, the destitute, criminals, the sick. Jesus is in our workplace, at the welfare department, at home, parish, school and football club. Wherever we are, God is. We need never worry that we have lost sight of him, for his love encompasses us at every moment in every place.

Listen for him as you are busy at your work. Think of him and talk to him in the mundane tasks, ask his advice in difficult situations. Acknowledge his presence, for he is the unseen partner who longs to share your life with you. Then, like the disciples, we shall recognise him as the true Lord who will guide us here before eventually leading us to heaven.