

Peter's Real Confession

I. The disciples were in a waiting stage; waiting for the next big thing, the final commission to go forth and baptize and witness to the life of Jesus. The disciples may have had too much “together time” as they tried to understand what happened from the crucifixion to the empty tomb. Peter seemed tired of just sitting around the upper room or wherever they gathered. He decided to go fishing. Six of the other disciples leaped at the idea of *doing something*. They left Jerusalem and headed back north to Tiberius. At least four of the seven are fishermen; the others went along for the boat ride. Fishing was something Peter knew about; he was comfortable in a boat and on the water. He may not have really cared if he caught any fish. Just being on the water at night; feeling the wind in his face and the rocking of the waves beneath his feet; hearing the creak of the boat. Even the smell of old, dead fish wasn't all

that bad. It is into this moment of calm that the Lord appeared to them as a man curious about their fishing luck. The sudden catch of fish seemed more than coincidence to John. He took a second look at the man on the beach, recognized the Lord. Peter of course had to see for himself. In the familiar meal the all the disciples recognized the risen Lord. Several scripture commentators point out the only other mention of a “charcoal fire” was in the courtyard of the Sanhedrin where Peter denied the Lord. The Lord “never mentioned Peter's failure,” never made him feel guilty [M.McGlone, NCR]. He invited Peter to reconciliation for the times he denied him. By his three-fold, “You know I love you,” he recommitted himself to the Lord who made him a shepherd to his flock. It would be nice to say everyone lived happily ever after. But this isn't a fairy tale. Peter and the others were now back on mission and while it would lead them to successes,

there would be suffering and death as well, as we heard in the first reading from the Acts of Apostles. **Concl.** This is more than just another fish story, it is the risen Lord gathering his disciples around him. The boat ride restored calm to a stressed out group and into that peace they found the Lord or he found them. Isn't that the way it often can be for us? Most of us have a *place* we like to go or *something we like to do* that restores our calm. And in that place or moment, the Lord sometimes invites us to healing *and* a re-commitment to follow him. He *does* warn Peter and us the way is not always ours to choose. But it leads to life. Sinners are always welcome.

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