

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST SIMON STOCK, CARMELITE CHURCH**  
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**Priests in the Parish:** Fr Thaddeus Ekuma ocd, Fr Matt Blake ocd,  
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**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022**

**God's Offer of Endless Opportunities**

The scene presented to us in our Gospel today shows Jesus once again with his disciples. It is the third time he is appearing to them after his resurrection, and the focus is on Peter. The other two appearances were in Jerusalem. This time it is in Galilee, by the Sea. In the previous appearance in Jerusalem, Jesus came to restore Thomas' faith. We recall that Thomas had been absent at Jesus' first appearance in the Upper Room and doubted that Jesus had risen when he was told. But in that episode, there is no mention of any significant exchange between Jesus and Peter. It is as if they had said nothing to each other since Peter's denial. Of course, Peter had been extremely happy that Jesus is alive. What a relief he must have felt to see him alive after what he'd done to him. But Jesus having not said anything to him must have been killing him. So, Jesus makes a third appearance in Galilee, this time particularly for Peter – not only to restore him and reassure him of continued friendship but to offer him another opportunity to show his love for Jesus.

So, the disciples are together in Galilee – not all of them though; the list shows there are only seven of them present. They must have returned to Galilee to their daily life after it seemed there was nothing more to do in Jerusalem. However, if we take Mark's Gospel into account, we will recall that the angel in the tomb had told the women to go and tell the disciples to go to Galilee. But it is hard to unify the accounts of Mark and John, the Evangelists, here. In any case, Peter, as if to say "let's go back to our life" told the others that he was going fishing, and they all went out that night to fish. But they caught nothing all night. And by dawn Jesus showed up on the shore (although they did not recognise him) and told them to dip in their net again. They hauled in such amazing number of fish that one of them (the one Jesus loved) realised it was Jesus at the shore. Then Peter, once again being himself, jumped in excitement into the water and swam to Jesus while the others towed the near-breaking net ashore. As they arrive, they find that Jesus has brought bread, made fire and is roasting fish on it. And Jesus invites them to breakfast as if to relive the good old times of the Last Supper when they all ate and drank and spoke about living and loving as one family amid what was about to befall Jesus.

Then the highpoint of the occasion arrives, after the meal, when Jesus calls Peter's name for the first time since his resurrection. I wasn't there, but even now I can feel the pulse in the group and how racing Peter's heart (and indeed everyone's in the group) must have been. That awkwardness of not being spoken to after you had done something wrong is so heart rending. So when the person eventually calls your name, you know exactly what he is about to say. But Jesus says something different. He does not remind Peter of his betrayal, nor does Jesus say anything about what he had suffered. Instead Jesus speaks about love, almost reminiscent of the Last Supper when they had a long discussion about love. Nevertheless, he asks Peter this one question three times: "Do you love me?" As Peter affirms his commitment to love Jesus, he is commissioned three times to feed Jesus' lambs and sheep – an assurance that his previous failure has been forgiven. Jesus further reminds Peter that his commitment to love by feeding the lambs and sheep will inevitably lead him to a

place he would rather not go – to a place of suffering. Peter would later give his life doing exactly what Jesus told him.

The actions of Jesus towards Peter aptly portrays the way Jesus relates to us, his disciples. He always on the lookout for us, to restore us when we are burdened with guilt and feeling unforgivable. He does not simply come to us to tell us we are forgiven; he does something a lot deeper than that. His abiding presence provides a reassurance that whatever our failings are, there is a place in his heart for us.

At the same time, we must look at Peter, a great personality that he is. What is the difference between Peter and Judas Iscariot? It is clear – Peter never gave up on being restored. He had great trust in Jesus' mercy and Jesus himself saw the beauty of Peter's heart and that he had acted out of fear. We should never feel so guilty as to distance ourselves from Jesus, for he always restores anyone who trusts in his mercy, and more than that, he gives the person the power to love.

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## NOTICES

### **Priest Training Fund**

Next Sunday is Good Shepherd Sunday, the day we pray for priests and for vocations to the priesthood. The annual collection for the Priest Training Fund will take place next weekend. This fund pays for the priestly formation of men for the Catholic priesthood. There are currently 58 men studying at Allen Hall seminary, 17 of whom are from our own Diocese, and two men are studying in Rome, also from our Diocese. Last year four men who studied at Allen Hall were ordained to the priesthood to serve as our future priests. This fund also supports the ongoing enrichment and formation of our ordained priests. Your generous donation helps ensure we can support these men who are called to be like Christ the Good Shepherd. Donation envelopes are available in the back of the church. Please take one home, read the information, and bring it back next weekend with your donation. Please continue to pray for vocations and for our priests. You can use the QR code to make your donation online or visit [www.rcdow.org.uk/donations](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/donations). Thank you for your generosity.

### **Diocese of Westminster Synodal Pathway Report**

The archdiocese has recently published the synodal pathway report which incorporates all the conversations held within the diocese including our parish here. This report is available to read on our website (follow the 'Our Parish Synodal Pathway' on Homepage) as well as the archdiocesan website. When we have digested this report, it will be time to find ways of implementing some of the ideas we raised concerning our own church community. Please do read the report.

### **Please Support 'The Passage'**

The Passage, a Catholic charity working with homeless people is raising funds through the Big Give a matched giving scheme until 12.00 noon on Monday 9 May. Every £1 donated online before 12.00 noon on Monday 9 May makes £2 and £2.25 if you are a taxpayer through Gift Aid. Please visit: <https://bit.ly/BigGiveAprilMay22> to support the campaign. The campaign 'It takes more than a house to make a home' focuses on the services we provide to people who have been homeless in their journey to being happily settled in a new home. The Passage would be very grateful for your support. For questions about the campaign or assistance making a donation please ring 020 7592 1856.

<b><u>Collections Last Sunday</u></b>	Offering	£1418
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£53

Thank you for your generosity

*Fr. Thaddeus, OCD*