

## THEY SIGNALLED THEIR PARTNERS

We do not choose our companions, nor those with whom we live, and we cannot change them, nor can we expect them to understand us, or to be our friends if the gift is not given... But when, having accepted all this, I feel that the lives of these people have to do with me, when in faith I feel that my path towards God passes today through them, then I am ready to live this co-vocation as a blessing and a challenge: it is Another who has put us together to go beyond us. The first disciples must have felt something like this when everyday life had become routine and they could not catch anything, and it was precisely then that a Presence reached out to them and asked them. We need to rediscover the gift of the Spirit that is hidden in a life woven together with others, with shared visions and projects.

### John 21: Transfiguring Everyday Life

«Shortly afterwards, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the lake of Tiberias. Each one is named by name, as is each one of you who begins this journey that is the Chapter. Highlighting the uniqueness and difference of each one of you, the different gifts you will share. « Now there were together Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana of Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. » (Jn 21,2). Those "other two" are each one of us...

During the night nothing went as expected and they feel frustrated. And it is precisely there, in the nights of our lives and of the world, that he comes where we least expect him.:

### You've caught something?

Jesus comes asking, not imposing; offering, suggesting. He approaches as a poor man, coming unannounced to tell us that he hungers for our lives. He addresses his disciples lovingly as his boys. Jesus asks them for sustenance, what nourishes life, what gives it flavour. And they have to recognise that they have nothing, that their hands are empty.

Jesus invites them to cast the net on the right side, he is not asking them to do anything special. Do what you normally do, cast your nets, but on the right side, trusting in his word. We need his word to penetrate our daily actions so that life discovers its fruitfulness.

« Cast the net on the right side". From the right side of the temple flowed the water that cleansed and healed everything (Ez 47, 1-10). Christian iconography places the wound in his side on the right. (Jn 19, 34), the Door, the Fountain through which flows that current of unconditional love... Casting the nets again on the side of the heart.

The one who has let himself be loved the most discovers it first: "It is the Lord" (v.7). Jesus has prepared a meal for them, his bread and fish, and he asks them for theirs too: Bring some of the fish you've caught (...) Come and eat" ...» (v. 9.12). A

friend who prepares lunch for them and invites them.

Fruitfulness does not happen in extraordinary things but in everyday and simple things. Before launching them into the mission, he rebuilds the community. He doesn't care about talent or abilities, only about love.

### Sent out in our fragility

**Jn 21, 15-18:**

«*Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?* (v. 15:16-17). Why does he call him Simon and not Peter? He takes it from his roots, from his family system, with his history, as each one of us is taken, to integrate the whole person, to leave nothing out.

Jesus, aware of human limitations and possibilities, asked his heart three times: «*Do you love me?*», to heal their wounds, to put mercy and joy in the space where guilt had grown. «*Do you love me?*». He asks each one of us. To be moved to see Jesus so human.

It is strange that Jesus makes Peter compare himself, "*do you love me more than these?*" (v.15). What does Peter know about how and how much John or the others love him. The question evokes the parable that Jesus tells Simon, a Pharisee who invited him to dinner. While they are at table, a woman, a public sinner, unexpectedly appears with a flask of perfume and anoints Jesus. (Lk 7, 36-50). Simon complains and Jesus tells him a story: «*A moneylender had two debtors: one owed him five hundred denarii and the other fifty. But since they had no money to pay, he forgave the debt to both of them. "Which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more..." Jesus said to him, "That's right" ...*».

And he will say of the woman who anoints him: «*If he shows such signs of love, he has been forgiven much, but he who is forgiven little will show little love*» (Lk 7, 47). In reality, what Jesus is saying to Peter is let yourself be loved to the core, let yourself be forgiven, because that enables you to love more. Jesus keeps resetting the counter to zero over and over again.

*Let yourself be loved* so that you can care for your brothers...not from your ego...but from your fragility...When you have gone through moments of fragility you are more prepared than before...Peter can, now, love more because he has been forgiven more. It is in his frailty, in his weakness, not in his strength, that Jesus entrusts him to his own, and reveals to him the limitless possibilities of love.

Peter answers him *philia*, he loves him with the love of a friend, Jesus asks him about *agape*, the love that is freed from ego, from self-sufficiency, from any intention to take possession of others..

### Let yourself be loved where you are

Jesus asks us about love and entrusts us to someone, and we are at the same time entrusted to others. We have much more love to give than we imagine, it exists in each of us in excess, and this love wants to be released, but it can only be released by pouring into others. Apparently, no one can open up to love for themselves. Let others open us to love and open others to love through us. *Let yourself be loved*, Jesus says to Peter. And it also says to each one of us. Whatever our situation, whatever we've done, *let yourself be loved there*. To be sent in new ways to care for the small and fragile.

### Regaining Meaning and Gratitude

The disciples had lost their image as followers, had hit rock bottom, and entered into great dissatisfaction. But the presence of the Lord *in their midst* leads them to recover the meaning of their lives: forgiveness, peace, overflowing joy, friendship remade... and the experience of a transformation. They feel a new chance at life. At first glance it seems that the reality remains the same, but it is through the encounters, with Jesus and with each other, that the facts take on a new meaning.

«Apparently their situation has not changed, they are still poor, but now the most basic things that are within reach of their poverty (bread, wine, fish) become *a celebration*. Apparently, they are still referring to humble service, but the Risen Lord has revealed to them the *fruitfulness* of this attitude ("*feed my sheep*"). The price to be paid is not hidden from them ("*another will gird you*") but Jesus also promises his *presence*» (T. Mifsud).

### Living awake

When we live from the depths, everything becomes a sacred act. *To live awake* to this discreet Presence of God in everyday life.

*Gratitude for so much good received* is what will inaugurate a joyful way of encountering God in all things. We can ask ourselves what happened to the disciples to go from fear and cowardice to giving their lives with joy for Jesus. ¿Is it that Peter no longer had to endure and struggle with the pride of his old man, nor did Mary Magdalene go round and round with her affection? Surely, they did, but they felt their weakness welcomed by a greater Love with which the Risen One took their lives, to the point of saying with Paul: *It really is He who lives in us*.

It is not a simple joy that you will feel now, but the joy that has matured in forgiveness and in the patient acceptance of your own life. That of those who feel their human condition welcomed with immense tenderness. «*My grace is sufficient for you,*" he will say to Paul, when he is tired of struggling with an aspect of himself.

Thankfulness is the sign that our life is going in the right direction. It is the measure of our life, the daily recognition that whatever we can be, we are because of Another, that there is nothing of ours that we have not first received. What we are, what is most precious in what each of us is, does not depend on us. It is given to us.

## Allow the others in

«Go where you don't want to go» (v.18), says the Lord to his friend Peter, because he himself had gone through that situation. Accept the process of life and say yes to every change in the stages. "Thou shalt stretch thy hands," without being afraid. To stretch out your hands and be led by the Lord Jesus at this time of the chapter, by my sisters. And be willing to let go. Letting go is another way of detaching. What we hold prevents life, if we hold our breath we suffocate. To let go is to go into the depths of life, it is to fear less and love more. Let go of our prejudices and our ideas. To open our hands and allow others to enter with different ideas, with different cultures, with their gifts and their weaknesses, their worries, their suffering, their wisdom, their joy...

In the end, we will have to do only one thing: *extend our hands together*. What we are in the depths knows the way and will unite with God...

*What is the most important thing in life, the disciple asked her teacher: the journey or the destination? The company, replied the teacher.*

We need to assert the "fish" of each other. Knowing that we belong and are part of something greater, that we have a *place*.

