

HEARERS OF THE WORD

Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41; Psalm 30 (29); Revelation 5:11-14; John 21:1-19

Jesus took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish

John 21:1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. 2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. 4 Just after day-break, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. 9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know

that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." 19 (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this, he said to him, "Follow me."

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

There are two scenes here, with the first scene laying ground for the second one. For the ordinary reader, these stories come as a surprise after the apparent conclusion in John 20:30-31. Why the addition? It seems to have been written after the "death" of the major figure of this Gospel:

Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" So the rumour spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" (John 21:22-23)

Until that moment, this Johannine community seems to have got along without a leadership structure and without a link to the "great" church, symbolised by Peter. The whole text functions as a kind of accord, whereby the Johannine community comes to recognise the role of Peter, through a reminder of his fundamental call and through his three-

Thought for the day

In our ordinary world, words such as compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation convey an essential, if difficult and at the same time joyful, human task. In our world of faith, we add other words, such as mercy and grace, which make us conscious of the free gift, unalloyed, with no conditions attached. Our role is not to "retain the sins of any" precisely so that they may know, at our hands, true forgiveness. In our Gospel, Peter is not reproached; rather he is set free. That is love, the only commandment.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help us all to hear your invitation, "Do you love me?" and set our hearts free to practice forgiveness.

fold rehabilitation, significantly around a charcoal fire. Resurrection appearance narratives are highly symbolic in nature, usually reflecting critical issues *at the time of writing*.

KIND OF WRITING

These scenes belong to a familiar pattern found in the resurrection appearance narratives in Matthew, Luke and John: the initiative of Jesus, non-recognition, recognition and then mission.

However, the first story closely resembles an expanded call story in Luke 5 (see next section).

OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. ... I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken. (Ezek 34:15-16, 23-24)

NEW TESTAMENT FOREGROUND

(i) This text has some kind of link with a similar passage found in Luke 5:1-11, an expanded call story in that context.

(ii) There is also some kind of link with the establishment of the authority of Peter in the New Testament. Matthew alone has this passage, after the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi: *And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.* (Matt 16:16-20)

(iii) "To draw" has a special usage in John's Gospel: *No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.* (John 6:44) *And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.* (John 12:32)

ST PAUL

While we were staying there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. He came to us and took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands with it, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Since he would not be persuaded, we remained silent except to say, "The Lord's will be done." (Acts 21:10-14)

BRIEF COMMENTARY

Verse 1 In the New Testament, this Gospel is the only one to use the name Tiberias for the Sea of Galilee, so we are still within the Johannine tradition. The other links are also to do with the sea and with an epiphany (cf. John 6:1, 23).

Verse 2 The list of names is highly unusual, because it expands the usual trio (Peter, James and John) to include characters with a noted role in this Gospel (Thomas and Nathanael, recalling the end and the beginning of Jesus'

ministry), as well as two unnamed figures.

Verse 3 This is a strange proposal, representing what? Hardly a desire to go back to his ordinary life. Rather, it is essential for the setting up of the story. "Night" is always special in John: the time of evil, the time of separation: "Night is coming when no one can work." (John 9:4) Perhaps it represents the disorientation of the Johannine community after the death of the Beloved Disciple, as well as the need to rediscover the fundamentals of the call of Jesus, as they faced a new beginning.

Verse 4 Lack of recognition is part of these stories. Suddenly it is morning; on account of Jesus' presence, night is over.

Verse 5 "Children" is the special address of the Johannine community to its members (see 1 John 2:14, 18, for the diminutive—little children—as here in John 21).

Verse 6 This is very close to Luke 5.

Verse 7 Peter still needs the prompting of the "disciple whom Jesus loved." The characteristic impetuosity of Peter was widely remembered, leaving its mark even in later symbolic scenes.

Verse 8 The quick arrival resembles Jn 6:21.

Verse 9 Charcoal is an explicit evocation of the fire in John 18:18, where the same unusual word is used.

Verse 10 Meals were typical of the ministry of Jesus and are here evoked in a resurrection setting, as in the Emmaus story.

Verse 11 Notice the prominence of Peter—he alone, although seven people are present. The number of fish has given rise to very interesting speculation. There is a late claim in Jerome that one hundred and fifty three was the known number of species of fish at the time. That would fit with the symbolism of the catch—the Petrine ministry is universal or "catholic."

Verse 12 Jesus is now the real host of the gathering and issues the invitation.

Verse 13 Explicit echo of John 6 and of the Lord's Supper (even though that is not recounted in this Gospel).

Verse 14 The counting "stitches" this story into the previous ch. 20. It is an explicit editorial comment to make sure

we know what the story is about.

Verse 15 The three-fold questioning is clearly an echo of the three-fold denial. The writer alternates the words for love (*agapaō* and *phileō*) but this seems to bear no special meaning. The full phrase "son of John" is found only in John 1:42, but insisted upon here. In the earlier text the name Cephas is given without any confession of faith, simply a future statement of greatness. Here in ch. 21, that promise is fulfilled.

Verse 16 Repeated with varied words.

Verse 17 Eventually, Peter is touched. An echo of John 16:20.

Verse 18 Written after the death of Peter. Cf. 15:8 and 12:26.

Verse 19 The very first call of Jesus in the Gospels is evoked. Even in advanced resurrection scenes, the core of that call remains at the heart of ministry.

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The disciples spend a fruitless night fishing and catching nothing. Things change dramatically when Jesus appears and invites them to try again. Remember those who came to you and encouraged you to try again when you felt discouraged. Perhaps on some of these occasions the results were beyond your expectations.

2. The story can serve as a reminder that sometimes we are wasting our time if we try to work on our own without the Lord's help. When have you found that your work or life was more fruitful when you acknowledged that you needed God's help and you spoke to God about your need?

3. Peter is given the chance to be fully reconciled with his Master after his denial during the Passion. Remember those who have given you an opportunity for reconciliation after you had hurt them or let them down. What was it like for you to be given this chance? To whom have you offered the possibility of reconciliation?

PRAYER

God of life, in your risen Son, you reveal your abiding presence among us, and summon those reborn in baptism to lives of worship and service. Fill this assembly with reverence as we come before you in prayer. Grant us courage and zeal in bearing witness before the world to your Son, Jesus Christ, the first-born from the dead, for ever and ever. Amen.

To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour!

Rev 5:11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 singing with full voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!”

13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing,

“To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!”

14 And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshipped.

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Our reading reminds us of the significance of the liturgy in the Apocalypse. Revelation has many liturgical elements, such hymns, responses, places of worship, even liturgies both mocking and in earnest. It is even likely that the whole book was meant to be performed in some way, a kind of enacted prophecy cum apocalypse, with lively participation in the hymns, taken from the repertoire of the community. In this way, the author encourages “ownership” of the message through the texts already familiar from the liturgy.

With the renewed use of these texts in the post-Vatican II breviary, we may also have a sense of the reassuringly familiar. On Tuesdays, the NT canticle for Evening Prayer is taken precisely from Rev 4:11; 5:9, 10, 12.

The power of the text is given thrilling voice in Handel’s *Messiah*. He chose to close the entire drama of the Christ with this text in movement 53, a fitting act of worship and prayer.

KIND OF WRITING

After the opening vision and the letters to the seven churches, Revelation 4-5 forms the foundation for the rest of the Apocalypse. From chapter 6 onwards, the writer reflects back to the community their experience of suffering, especial-

ly at the hands of the empire. There is no understatement of evil in the Apocalypse—on the contrary!—and the portrait of destructive forces could be quite overwhelming. It is significant, therefore, that this grim parade is preceded by the immensely reassuring chapters 4-5, guaranteeing future victory before the battle begins.

There are four sections to the vision. 4:1-11; 5:1-5, 6-10 and 11-14. This pattern, perhaps in some measure resembling synagogue worship and Christian liturgy, may help:

I. 4:1-11: the *Kedushah* on God’s holiness in creation, as the foundation for his act of redemption.

II. 5:1-5: the *Shema*, celebrating the gift of the Torah and the new Scroll, which only the Lamb can open.

III. 5:6-10: *Gelulah* or redemption, recounting the cross and resurrection in the symbolic language of the Apocalypse.

IV. 5:11-14: *Doxology*, bringing together the present earthly and future heavenly liturgies, from which the membership may draw strength.

CONTEXT IN THE COMMUNITY

The community was undergoing some experience of societal alienation—especially in regard to emperor worship—and perhaps a level of harassment not to say persecution. The question arose, where to find strength to stay faithful? Our New Testament Apocalypse teaches that faith in the lamb, still bearing the marks of one slain, is central. At the same time, the members encounter this risen Lord in the liturgy and the common prayer is meant to be *the* source of strength for the faithful.

RELATED PASSAGES

The New Testament Apocalypse never *cites* the Bible but almost every verse alludes to a biblical text of some kind.

v. 11: 1Kings 22:19; Daniel 7:10.

v. 12: 1Chronicles 29:11; Isaiah 53:7

v. 13: 1Kings 22:19; 2Chronicles 18:18; Psalms 47:8; 146:6; Isaiah 6:1; Ezekiel 1:26–27; Sirach 1:8

v. 14: on the living creatures, see Ezek

1:22; 1:5; 10:12, 14.

For the intended hearers, this resonance with the Bible would have bestowed great authority to the newly minted text of the Apocalypse.

BRIEF COMMENTARY

Verse 11 Once the fulfilment of redemption has been achieved, there takes place a vast act of worship, which includes innumerable angels, the animals and the elders, who proclaim the seven-fold worthiness of the Lamb. His worthiness enables him to unlock the seven-sealed scroll. The lamb is “still bearing the marks of one slain.” In Greek, this is a perfect participle, which denotes that the effects have continued into the present time. The risen Jesus takes with him, even into his victory, the experience of suffering. At the same time, this is a kind of anticipatory liturgy, looking forward to the final victory over evil.

Verse 12 The hymn repeats what may be an element of early Christian liturgy, “Worthy is the Lamb...” The ascription is seven-fold, indicating perfection.

Verse 13 This act of worship is shared by all creation, very fully conjured up. This is all done before the Apocalypse describes woes etc. A reasonable case could be made for saying that the Apocalypse teaches the salvation of all humanity eventually. Then follows a four-fold blessing, appropriately following the four-fold sketch of creation.

Verse 14 Finally, the worship on earth is echoed in heaven by a resounding amen, from the four creatures and further mirrored in the prostration of the twenty-four elders (representing the Old and New Testaments).

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The assurance to those in great difficulty is mighty. Have I felt the need of such help? What has it been like?

2. The common prayer of worship can be a terrific source of renewal. Has that ever been my experience, so that I say “amen” from the heart?

PRAYER

Faithful God, for all you have done for us in Jesus, we raise a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Yours in the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen!

And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him

Acts 5:27 When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, 28 saying, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.” 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than any human authority. 30 The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.”

33 *When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.* 34 *But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up and ordered the men to be put outside for a short time.* 35 *Then he said to them, “Fellow Israelites, consider carefully what you propose to do to these men.* 36 *For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and disappeared.* 37 *After him Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census and got people to follow him; he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered.* 38 *So in the present case, I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone; because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail;* 39 *but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them—in that case you may even be found fighting against God!”* They were convinced by him, 40 *and when they had called in the apostles, they had them flogged.*

Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 As they left the council, they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of the name.

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

The lectionary excerpt omits vv. 33-40a for the sake of brevity and as a result the decision to release the apostles is not so easy to grasp. For a better understanding, the missing verses are restored here.

KIND OF WRITING

There are three elements here. Firstly, a story of arrest and defence, frequent in Acts, in vv. 27-28. Secondly, a speech—Peter’s fifth, but one of very many Acts—which is in reality a proclamation of The Way, in vv. 29-32. Thirdly, there is a summary statement in vv. 40-42.

CONTEXT IN THE COMMUNITY

Our reading is part of the larger story in Acts 4:24-5:42. There is increasing hostility to The Way. Paradoxically, such antagonism gives rise to increasing courage and “boldness” (a great early Christian virtue).

RELATED PASSAGES

The scene is typical of Acts and a fulfilment of the closing verses of Luke: *Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.* (Luke 24:46–49)

BRIEF COMMENTARY

Verse 27 A re-arrest has been ordered because the previous gagging order had been disobeyed and the disciples found themselves again before the Sanhedrin.

Verse 28 Cf. *So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.* (Acts 4:18) It is clear historically that, while the Romans actually executed Jesus, it was at the behest of the Jewish leadership. Luke does not blame the people as such, as does Matthew evidently.

Verse 29 This is Peter’s fifth speech in Acts and it reflects elements already present in previous orations. The opening statement of principle is very hard to disagree with. Gamaliel says much the same thing in another way in v. 39.

This principle was by then a Greek proverb of sorts. Cf. Plato *Apology* 29D *I must obey God rather than you.* Also in Sophocles, Herodotus, Epictetus, Athenaeus, Livy and Plutarch.

It is not, however, only classical. It is also found in many biblical passages in the prophets and in the Deuteronomistic writings. Here are examples: Gen 22:18; Ex 19:3-6; Dt 4:30; Jer 3:13 etc. The “must” is a kind of “divine necessity” found throughout the Acts.

Verse 30 God of our ancestors: 3:13. Raised Jesus: 2:24, 32; 3:15. Hanging on a tree: Deut 21:22-23—a verse in Paul’s mind too when he wrote, *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* (Gal 3:13–14)

Verse 31 Exalted: *Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.* (Acts 2:33) Repentance and forgiveness of sins: Luke 3:3; 17:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 8:38.

Verse 32 Witnesses: 2:32; 3:15. Holy Spirit: 2:33 and forty-two other occurrences in the Acts. Obedience: “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!” (Luke 11:28)

Verse 40b Yes, but not before having them flogged. Cf. Acts 4:18; 9:27. Vv. 40-42 form a summary statement, the fifth so far in the Acts.

Verse 41 Joy in suffering for the name is the mark of messianic communities: Acts 8:8; 11:23; 13:48, 52; 15:3, 31; 16:34. E.g. *He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.* (Acts 16:34)

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Has it ever been my experience to be under pressure for being a believer? How did I react? Did I flinch? Did I “go under”? Did I grow?

2. Choosing God rather than human authority could be a life-changing choice: has such a stark option been my experience?

PRAYER

God, you raised Jesus from the dead and gave us life in his name.

As we bear the name of Christian, help to follow Jesus not only in name but also in fact. Give us the courage to bear witness and the boldness to speak out. Amen.

THE LITURGY

Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41; Psalm 30 (29); Revelation 5:11-14; John 21:1-19

READINGS 1 AND 3

The same figure—Peter—is dominant in both readings. In the Gospel, we see traces of the old Peter, in need of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. In the Acts, we see the new Peter, marked (mostly, not always!) by courage.

THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 30 (29) fits the story of pressure and release really well. The first two lines say it all: *I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me and have not let my enemies rejoice over me.*

SUNDAY INTRODUCTIONS

First Reading

Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41

When we are under pressure for our faith, one of two things can happen. We can collapse before the pressure or we can grow in courage and faith.

Second Reading

Revelation 5:11-14

Our reading today takes us symbolically to the worship of the Lamb of God, Jesus, in heaven. Notice that the Lamb still bears the marks of the one slain (a better translation than “slaughtered”). The Risen Lord carries with him into resurrection his identity as one who has suffered as we do and so is able to help us, who suffer and are tempted.

Gospel

John 21:1-19

Today we have a rich sequence of stories, including the somewhat insistent restoration of Peter. In the end, the writer goes back to the fundamental call of Jesus: *Follow me.* We too encounter the Risen Lord; we too are in need of restoration; we too need to be reminded of Jesus’ invitation to follow him.

WEEKDAY INTRODUCTIONS

Monday 2 Mary

St Athanasius, bishop, doctor

Acts 6:8-15

Stephen, whose feast we celebrate on 26 December, was one of the seven chosen to relieve the pressure on the apostles

(Acts 6:5). Today we begin his story, a story of extraordinary witness leading to martyrdom. The Greek for a “witness” is *martyrs*, whence our word martyrdom.

John 6:22-29

The focus throughout John 6 is really on the person of Jesus. This is very evident in today’s Gospel: ‘This is working for God: you must believe in the one he has sent.’

Tuesday 3 May

Sts Philip and James, apostles

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

The witnesses to the Risen Lord are foundational for Paul and among them we find James, one of today’s saints. We are to be witnesses in our day.

John 14:6-14

The Gospel mentions Philip, who is given a relatively high profile in John. He certainly cannot be accused of setting his sights too low — and still, his interjection leads to a rich and invigorating teaching from the Johannine Jesus.

Wednesday 4 May

Acts 8:1-8

Three important characters overlap in today’s narrative: Stephen, Paul and Philip. We will hear much of Paul later; for the moment the story of Philip is taken up. He was also one of the seven chosen in Acts 6:5. Is this the same Philip who was an apostle? This is not so clear, although early tradition affirms it is one and the same person.

John 6:35-40

Our Gospel today is rich in invitation. The words of Pope Francis come to mind: *Let the risen Jesus enter your life, welcome him as a friend, with trust: he is life! If up till now you have kept him at a distance, step forward. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk: you won’t be disappointed.*

Thursday 5 May

Bl. Edmund Ignatius Rice, religious

Acts 8:26-40

Today we hear a memorable anecdote involving an exotic figure, the finance minister of the “Candace” or queen of

Ethiopia. There are considerable links with the Emmaus story: the unrecognised “guest”, the explanation of the Scriptures, the sudden disappearance and displacement. Luke wants us to “hear” these stories together.

John 6:44-51

The sermon on the bread of life continues. You may notice references to the incarnation, the cross and the resurrection.

Friday 6 May

Acts 9:1-20

The story of Saul / Paul begins today, a story which will occupy the rest of the Acts. The conversion of Paul was a key event for early Christianity, placing at the service of The Way a remarkable person of faith, intelligence and energy.

John 6:52-59

The “giving of my flesh” takes place in this Gospel at the crucifixion. Eating and drinking are metaphors for faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection, celebrated sacramentally in the Eucharist.

Saturday 7 May

Acts 9:31-42

The story we are about to hear has a double resonance. It resembles the story of Jairus’ daughter in Luke 8, which in turn resembles the story of Elijah and the widow’s son in 1 Kings 17. Luke’s message is clear: prophetic actions continue among the followers of The Way.

John 6:60-69

There are several things “going on” in this reading. The departure of some mostly likely refers to a split in the community when some walked away (no unknown today, alas). The close of John 6 is a version of the scene in Capernaum—*who do you say I am?* The wording is very different, but Peter is the spokesman and this affirmation of faith is one of the strongest in this Gospel.