

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

LECTIONARY #48

READING I Acts 5:27–32, 40b–41

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the **captain** and the **court officers** had brought
the **apostles** in
and made them **stand** before the **Sanhedrin**,
the **high priest** questioned them,
“We gave you **strict orders**, did we not,
to **stop teaching** in that name?
Yet you have **filled Jerusalem** with your **teaching**
and want to **bring this man’s blood** upon us.”
But **Peter** and the **apostles** said in reply,
“We must **obey God** rather than **men**.
The **God** of our **ancestors** raised **Jesus**,
though you had him **killed** by **hanging** him on a **tree**.
God exalted him at his **right hand** as **leader** and **savior**
to grant **Israel** **repentance** and **forgiveness** of **sins**.
We are **witnesses** of these things,
as is the **Holy Spirit** whom **God** has **given** to those who
obey him.”

The **Sanhedrin** ordered the **apostles**
to **stop speaking** in the **name** of **Jesus**, and **dismissed** them.
So they **left** the **presence** of the **Sanhedrin**,
rejoicing that they had been found **worthy**
to **suffer dishonor** for the **sake** of the **name**.

The high priest has no patience for these righteous zealots.

His anger peaks at the thought that they are implicating him in Jesus' death.

Peter is self-confident. He was freed and ordered by an angel to preach of Jesus.

Even this setting is an opportunity to proclaim “the name” of Jesus. “Repentance” and “forgiveness” should not be run together. They are distinct concepts.

Note that both the disciples and the Holy Spirit give witness.

Although the flogging is left out of our portion today, let that violence color the announcement of the disciples' brusque dismissal.

It is a sober rejoicing cited here; read slowly, aware of those today who still suffer and die for the sake of the “name.”

READING I In the first reading, Peter and the apostles pay the price of being jailed and interrogated for their witness to God's salvation wrought through Jesus' death and Resurrection. They defend themselves by declaring that such public testimony is more imperative than obedience to human authority, and they rejoice in the ill treatment received. Through Christ they have learned that deliverance from death comes through death.

Death lasts a moment; God's love lasts for life eternal.

READING II His vision in Revelation offers a dense theology. The slain Lamb, recalling the figures of the suffering Servant (Isaiah 53:6–7) and the paschal lamb of the exodus (Exodus 12:12–13), reveals Christ sacrificed and resurrected, endowed now with the full messianic purpose of saving the world and restoring it to its pristine design. The throne

indicates God's absolute sovereignty over history and over all beings, sovereignty now exercised by the risen Christ. The twenty-four elders comprise the ideal Church, including the Old and New Covenant (twelve tribes and twelve Apostles). The four living creatures are the personified sign of the manifold action of God extending in the four cardinal directions, north, south, east, and west. Christ is the slain Lamb who, through his sacrifice, gives his life for many; the Lamb who was

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13 (2a)

**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.
or R. Alleluia.**

I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew me
clear
and did not let my enemies rejoice over
me.

O LORD, you brought me up from the
netherworld;
you preserved me from among those
going down into the pit.

Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful
ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.
For his anger lasts but a moment;
a lifetime, his good will.

At nightfall, weeping enters in,
but with the dawn, rejoicing.

Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me;
O LORD, be my helper.

You changed my mourning into dancing;
O LORD, my God, forever will I give you
thanks.

This is the second of six consecutive weeks we read from Revelation.

You are narrating a cosmic vision that should evoke a sense of awe. Try to "see" in your own mind's eye all the images you relate.

"Living creatures" and "elders" symbolize all creation and the Church.

The seven words that characterize the Lamb should suggest *distinct* qualities.

The whole universe gives praise. Distinguish one location from another.

Speak this as your own prayer that fuses gratitude and awe.

Pause after "answered" as if to listen to the "Amen" before you speak it. Imagine the whole Church falling to its knees in adoration.

slain and is "standing" is Christ, once dead, now risen; the "seven horns" refers to the fullness of divine power; the seven eyes are "the seven spirits of God," the fullness of the Spirit. The attributes of the Lamb (power, wealth . . . praise) are seven, and indicate that the Risen One possesses the fullness of divine virtue. The universal multitude acclaims God's unending reign. Our Eucharistic celebration, at which the slain Lamb of God is present in the Body and Blood on the altar, is replete with joy and

READING II Revelation 5:11-14

A reading from the Book of Revelation

**I, John, looked and heard the voices of many angels
who surrounded the throne
and the living creatures and the elders.**

**They were countless in number, and they cried out
in a loud voice:**

**"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain
to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength,
honor and glory and blessing."**

**Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth
and under the earth and in the sea,
everything in the universe, cry out:**

**"To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor, glory and might,
forever and ever."**

**The four living creatures answered, "Amen,"
and the elders fell down and worshiped.**

enthusiasm. In the Eucharist we attest to the faith that God is the true Lord of history with its protagonist, Jesus Christ, the immolated Lamb, symbol of humility and self-surrender, triumphant in the resurrection. Humanity and all creation respond to God's salvific intervention with praise: "To the One seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, be praise and honor, glory and might, forever and ever." K.S.

GOSPEL

Fishing may sound to land-dwellers like an appealing trade. Think of the thrill of the catch, the sudden frenzy when the net is full or the bait has been taken. Remember the telling of fish stories and boasting about the size of a catch? But fishing is not as thrilling as it might at first seem. There are drawbacks. Fish do not always bite, a school of fish does not always find its way into the nets. It is a grueling task: the tedious wakefulness, the damp and cold, the rocking discomfort