

RECONCILIATION NEEDS TRUTH-TELLING, ACCOMPANIMENT & RITUAL

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Reconciliation needs Truth-telling, Accompaniment & Ritual

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LEARNING FROM THE GOSPELS

Over these two weekends, we learn from the Gospel of John about

- truth-telling, accompaniment and ritual.

Later in the year we will reflect on some Gospel passages about other dimensions of reconciliation

- including the journey to genuine sorrow,
- overcoming the power of deception,
- reparation and restitution, types of justice,
- desire for peace, forgiveness, wholeness
- hope and spirituality

TRUTH-TELLING

Last weekend we reflected on truth-telling as Jesus, resurrected, showed the disciples his wounds on the very first Easter Sunday, and eight days later for them with Thomas present, who had missed the first appearance.

They had been mourning his death, and feeling guilty about deserting Jesus at the time of his suffering and crucifixion.

Jesus didn't cover up the facts, he didn't suppress the truth. He offered them peace first, and showed his wounds in his hands and side. The initiative was with Jesus.

Perhaps over sixty years later, the Christian community, facing struggles around them, recorded in writing, that Jesus did show his wounds.

The Gospel of John, a gospel about love and truth and healing, recorded the oral tradition that had been passed down to the community by an eyewitness, one of the seven disciples that day.

We know that in truth-telling, some may not hear the first time, for many reasons. The disciples told Thomas, who didn't believe them. He needed to see the wounds himself.

For some people want to see the proof, and others will trust the testimony of honest people.

At his appearance, Jesus said to the disciples:

*“Jesus said to them again, **‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’**”*

Has the trauma been healed, because Jesus commissioned the disciples?

NO – the trauma and guilt were so deep within them, that Jesus took the initiative once more.

We know ourselves that it takes time to heal.

ACCOMPANIMENT HAS MANY DIMENSIONS

Accompanying someone or a group of people in the search for truth, or in the search for truth and reconciliation, has many dimensions.

Australia has not committed to a truth and reconciliation process.

The State of Victoria has begun one.

Internationally there have been many countries who have been on a reconciliation journey.

And there are many other countries that still try to hide the wounds.

We might be a parent, or a carer, or a friend, who is accompanying someone in the search for truth and healing.

We might be the one being accompanied.

In today’s Gospel passage, we focus on

- accompanying or journeying with people in their deep need for healing
- ritual in healing such trauma

GOSPEL OF JOHN 21:1-19

ACCOMPANYING IN HOSPITALITY

Instead of fulfilling their mission, seven returned to Galilee. They returned to the familiar, seeking security. Seeking safety, away from the memories of Jerusalem.

Seven of them, including their leader, Peter, went fishing.

Jesus appeared on the shore, to accompany them in their pain and in their healing.

He spoke to them, but in their pain, they did not recognise him.

He affectionately called them children. They followed his suggestion to cast their nets on the right side of the boat, and filled their net with fish. Finally, they recognised Jesus.

They came ashore and saw *“a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread.”*

Jesus responded to their needs by offering them hospitality.

And he gently invited a contribution by them to the meal by saying

‘Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.’

Simon Peter, their leader, *“went aboard and hauled the net ashore”* and Jesus served them.

RECONCILIATION RITUAL

Throughout this encounter of hospitality, Jesus discerned the feelings and thoughts of Simon Peter and his role among the disciples as leader.

He chose to lead Simon Peter in a reconciliation ritual that was indeed challenging.

Peter had denied knowing Jesus **three times** during the previous period of the suffering of Jesus.

*“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.’***

*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.’***

*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.’**”*

This ritual would influence the rest of Peter’s life,

- Knowing his own vulnerabilities
- Knowing deep within that Jesus forgave him and trusted him
- Restoring him to Christian ministry
- Uplifting him in love

In all his inadequacies, Peter learnt to trust in Jesus.

In all our inadequacies, may we continue to learn to trust in Jesus. Let us pray.

Father Gerry

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/050122.cfm>



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