

The Third Sunday of Easter
(Year C)

<i>First Reading</i>	Acts 5:27-32, 40B-41
<i>Response</i>	I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13
<i>Second Reading</i>	Revelation 5:11-14
<i>Gospel Acclamation</i>	Christ is risen, creator of all; he has shown pity on all people.
<i>Gospel</i>	John 21:1-19

The 3rd Sunday for Easter for Year C continues our journey through the resurrection appearances of Jesus to his Disciples. And for this reason, in year C, although most of the year is focused on the Gospel of Luke, on the 3rd Sunday of Easter we're going to have another reading from the Gospel of John. It's Jesus' famous appearance to the Disciples in the Sea of Galilee (or beside the Sea of Galilee). So if you turn to John 21:1-19, the gospel for today is kind of a long reading, but it's a very famous, very important story, and it's a story that's only given to us in the Gospel of John. So it's unique to John's gospel, and definitely worthy of our attention. So chapter 21:1-19 says this:

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tibe'ri-as; and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathan'a-el of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zeb'edee, and two others of his disciples were together. 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.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on 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, for the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and

sprang into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

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." He 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." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved 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. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, "Follow me."¹

Alright, let's stop there. Now, there's so much to talk about in this gospel. I'm going to just walk through it and highlight certain elements that I think are worthy of our attention. The first thing I would point out is just the setting. When John says that this happened by the Sea of Tibe'ri-as, it's important to remember that that's another name for the Sea of Galilee, because the city of Tibe'ri-as was on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, you can still go to Tibe'ri-as today. So it's just another name for the lake. So in your mind's eye you want to conceptualize this resurrec-

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible citations/quotations herein are from *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1994.

tion appearance of Jesus, the third resurrection appearance in the Gospel of John, as taking place not in Jerusalem (like the previous two appearances) to the Disciples and to Thomas, but rather in the north, in Galilee (by the Sea of Galilee, where the Apostles had originally come from). So that's a very important geographical point that's important to emphasize. Now in that context, Peter says something significant. He says, "I'm going fishing." And, for whatever reason, in recent years I've heard a number of homilists speculate that this shows to us that Peter had (so-to-speak) "given up" on his life as an Apostle, and kind of returned to his old life of being a fisherman beside the Sea of Galilee (a professional fisherman, as he was). Although I understand why that might preach well, in the sense that it might draw out a greater contrast between the dejection of the Disciples and the appearance of the risen Christ, but there really isn't any basis in the text for that proposal. There's no suggestion that Peter's lost his faith, or that the Apostles have turned away from their mission that Jesus gave to them.

In fact, if you look at the other gospels, like in Mark 16, it's really clear that Jesus tells the women to tell the Apostles to go ahead to Galilee, and that he would appear to them in Galilee. And there's some difficulty in trying to figure out the exact chronology of when all this works out. But for our purposes here, it's just really important to show that there isn't anything in the text that says they're going back to their old life. In fact, it might just be that they were hungry, right? And if you're a fisherman, and you're hungry, a good way to resolve that problem is to go fishing. So that seems the more likely explanation. They're in Galilee for whatever reason, whether it's because Jesus' message has finally been heeded, and they've gone ahead to meet him there. And they are going to go fishing, because it's night time, and that's what you do on the Sea of Galilee at night. In fact, I was recently talking to a priest whose gone to the holy land a lot, and he says that if you ever go to the holy land, be sure to get a hotel room that looks out over the Sea of Galilee if you're staying near the sea, because you'll see all the fishing boats out at night; because that's the time to fish on the Sea of Galilee. Do it at night. It's a good time.

So sure enough, it's night time, Peter says "I'm going fishing." And some of the Apostles say, "Hey, we're going with you." So they went out on the boat, but like always, they don't catch anything. These guys are terrible fishermen, apparently. And so, as dawn is breaking, Jesus comes to them. He's standing on the beach, and he's about a hundred yards away — so they're not far from the shore in this encounter with the risen Jesus. So the Disciples can see him, they can hear him, but they don't know that it's him. And he says these mysterious words, he says, "Chil-

dren, have you any fish?" Now, that's a bizarre way to refer to a boat full of full-grown men, who also happen to be professional fishermen. So there's your first clue that this is not an ordinary guy here. He addresses them as his children. And for whatever reason, they don't respond to that part, they just say "No." And then he says, "Well cast the net on the right side of the boat and you'll find some." Now, I'm not a fisherman myself, but I do know from personal experience that professional fishermen don't like to be told by non-professional fishermen how to fish. And I also can imagine a situation in which they've been fishing all night, and Jesus says "Well, did you try the right side of the boat?" Of course they threw it on the right side of the boat before that point (I mean), it's not as if they've just been throwing on the left side of the boat all night long without any success. So, this is a kind of mysterious thing too. He tells them, "Try the right side of the boat and you'll find some."

And for whatever reason, they do it. And not only do they catch fish, but there's so many fish in the net (which is probably a kind of a cast net here, if you've ever used a cast net. It throws out and it's a circular net and it goes down with weights and then it catches the shoal of fish and it encapsulates them and then when you pull it, it ties together at the end. Well it doesn't tie together. It bunches up at the end where the weights are and catches the fish and brings them up.) So in this case, they've thrown the net onto a school of fish with so many that it actually fills the net to the point of breaking. They're not even able to haul it in it's so heavy. And as soon as that happens, the disciple whom Jesus loves says to Peter, "It's the Lord." Now pause there for just a second. How does the Beloved Disciple know that it's Jesus just because of the multitude of fish? Well, on one level, it seems clear that he recognizes that it's the Lord because this is clearly a miracle. They didn't catch anything all night long, this mysterious guy says "Children, cast on the right side", they do, and now they can't even haul it up.

But on another level, this might be an allusion to the first miraculous catch of Simon Peter and John (and James, the brothers), in Galilee, which is recorded in the Gospel of Luke 5, the famous call of Peter. I just bring this up because this is one of those episodes in the Gospel of John that has made some scholars (some interpreters of John's gospel) conclude that the Gospel of John actually knew the Gospel of Luke. He's assuming that his readers are familiar with stories from the Gospel of Luke, because the story of the miraculous catch isn't in the Gospel of John. It's not at the beginning of the Gospel of John, and yet, the Beloved Disciple's response here seems to presume that he's familiar with this episode that has

taken place earlier. Now that might just be on the level of history, but it also might be on the level of the gospels. So some people have posited – there are lots of parallels between John’s gospel and Luke’s gospel that are only in John and Luke, another one being the disciples Mary and Martha. Those are mentioned in Luke and then when they appear in John, John seems to assume that his readers are familiar with them, perhaps from knowing the Gospel of Luke. Anyway, it’s kind of a side note, but it’s an interesting possibility given the Beloved Disciple’s response here to the miracle.

Now, as always, Simon Peter’s the impetuous one. So as soon as he realizes it’s Jesus, he doesn’t wait around to get to the shore. He actually jumps into the sea and swims to the shore to meet Jesus first hand, while the other Disciples are busy dragging the net full of fish and pulling the boat back to the land. Because they’re only about a hundred yards away from the shore. So we see Peter’s character, his impetuous kind of choleric temperament come through there even in his actions here. He doesn’t stop and think about things, he just acts. So he dives into the water, and when he gets onto the land, something significant happens. John tells us (the gospel tells us) that a charcoal fire was there on the shore and it has some fish and some bread on it. And the Greek word here for the charcoal fire, *anthrakia*, is kind of an unusual word for a fire. It’s a distinctive word. I recently heard an analogy that I thought was actually pretty helpful. If I told you, “Go look, you’ll find my book by the fireplace” (well that’s the common name), but if I say, “Look for the hearth.” The word hearth means the same thing as a fireplace, but it’s kind of a distinctive, a more unusual way to refer to a fireplace. That’s what *anthrakia* is like in Greek. It refers to a charcoal fire, but it’s kind of a specific term. And the reason it’s so significant here is that John has used that exact same term elsewhere in the Passion narrative, earlier in the gospel, in John 18, when John is describing Peter’s betrayal of Jesus (his denial of Jesus, I should say), three times saying that he doesn’t know him, that takes place in John 18:18. It says this (you can back up to verse 17):

The maid who kept the door said to Peter, "Are not you also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not." Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves; Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

I want you to think about that image too. Not only does Peter deny Jesus three times, but he does so while standing before a charcoal fire doing what? Warming himself. In the midst of Jesus' Passion, Peter is still focused on his own bodily comforts. It's a cold night in the spring time, in the holy land. And although the days are warm, the nights get cold. And so he's focused on his own physical comfort while his lord is undergoing his Passion (his trial) and being led to the cross. So, on this morning, when they encounter the risen Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus encounters Peter after the Resurrection in a context that would echo where he had denied him three times before. And it's in that context that Peter is going to be asked three times by Jesus, "Do you love me, do you love me, do you love me?" And so the clue there (the link)...the charcoal fire provides a kind of link that acts as an explanation, the clue to the meaning of this exchange between Jesus and Peter. Not only is it significant that it is the risen Lord who is appearing to the Disciples, who's manifested himself through this miracle of catching not just any fish, but a hundred and fifty three fish in one net — that's a big haul — and inviting them to have breakfast. But this exchange that takes place between Peter and Jesus particularly, is meant to echo the triple denial of Jesus, is now going to be counter-acted, undone, forgiven (so-to-speak), restored (Peter will be restored) through a triple affirmation of his love for Jesus.

So, I want to look at that exchange between Jesus and Simon Peter more closely here. So if you look at it, you'll notice something significant. Most people remember that Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me?" I mean, everybody kind of picks up on that. But notice the specific words of Jesus. What does he say? "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" What does that mean? "Do you love me more than the other Apostles?" Why would Jesus ask that? Well, two possibilities. First, think back to Peter's own emphatic declaration that when everyone else abandoned Jesus, he would be faithful. Remember that? "Even if they all abandon you, I will never abandon you." So Peter, before the Passion, had proclaimed he loved Jesus more than all the other Disciples. That he would be faithful even if they weren't. So in one sense there's an echo of Peter's former words here. But, on a deeper level (and I think this is even more important), Jesus is actually calling Peter to love him more than the others, in the sense that he's calling him to a position of primacy over the others. He's calling him to be the leader of the other Disciples. And you can see this because it is Peter (and Peter alone) that Jesus gives the office of shepherd. This is so crucial. It's not just that Peter's being restored by his triple affirmation of love, but that in being restored, Jesus is assigning to Peter the office of being shepherd over his flock. Look at Jesus' words

here. When Peter says I love you the first time, what does Jesus say? “Feed my lambs.” When he says it the second time, what does Jesus say? “Tend my sheep.” And then when he says it the third time, what does Jesus say? “Feed my sheep.” It’s unfortunate that in the Revised Standard Version the second one there they translate as “Tend my sheep.” It’s kind of weak. In English it makes it sound like, “Take care of the sheep... pat them on the head, be kind to them.” But the Greek word there is *poimaino*, which is just a verb for shepherd. So in other words it means “Feed my lambs...shepherd my sheep...feed my sheep.” So in other words, he’s establishing him as shepherd of the flock.

Now, the reason that is so crucial here in the context of John’s overall gospel is that in John 10, Jesus reveals that he himself is the Good Shepherd. And he even says there will be one flock and one shepherd. And then he turns around (after his resurrection) and makes Peter the shepherd of the flock. So, which is it? Is Jesus the shepherd or is Peter the shepherd? And the answer is both. Jesus is of course the Divine Shepherd, the Supreme Shepherd; we’re going to see that when we look at Jesus’ own words on Good Shepherd Sunday, but Peter is established as the earthly shepherd over the flock of Jesus’ disciples, and that includes (very importantly) the other twelve. As Jesus says, “Do you love me more than these?” So, the three questions (do you love me?) correspond to the three denials by Peter, and then the three exhortations establish Peter as the shepherd of the Church, as the shepherd of the disciples, as the shepherd of Jesus’ one flock.

And it’s interesting (and very powerful) that in that context, what does Peter’s role as chief shepherd mean? You might think, “Well look, this is great. Jesus is giving Peter power, right? He has authority. He’s the head of the Apostles. He has primacy over them and over the Church.” And that’s all true, but what are the implications? What does Christ-like leadership look like? Well it looks like martyrdom. It looks like execution. And Jesus, no sooner does he establish Peter as shepherd of the sheep (who, by the notice, he’s going to feed them – hmm. What might he feed them with? If you look at John’s gospel in particular, what is the imagery of food always linked with? Well it’s linked with Jesus feeding the multitudes bread and then promising to feed his Disciples with his body and his blood). So this is both governance of the Church, but also the sacramental life of the Church. He’s going to feed them with the Eucharist. He will feed the flock with the bread of life. But no sooner does Jesus say that does he tell Peter, “When you were young you used to dress yourself and you’d go wherever you want, but when you are old you’re going to stretch out your hands, another will dress you, and carry you to where you

do not wish to go.” Now John here (or the author of John’s gospel, the Beloved Disciple) steps into the narrative and adds a kind of parenthetical aside when he says “This Jesus said to show by what death he was to glorify God.” So, although it is not explicit there that Peter is going to be crucified, the image of stretching out his hands implies that. It’s often been inferred from that, I mean, you wouldn’t need to stretch out your hands (necessarily) to be decapitated – that would be one form of Roman execution. But the form of Roman execution for non-citizens (which is what Peter is, he’s a Jew, not a citizen of the Roman Empire) would be by crucifixion. So this is a prophecy of Peter’s eventual martyrdom. And you can actually see in that context, Jesus’ words to Peter take on a whole different light. “Follow me.” So what does it mean, “Follow me.”? It means follow me all the way to the cross, all the way to death.

So I think it’s powerful when we think about the triple love question that Jesus has: “Do you love me, do you love me, do you love me?” Initially, that first word love there, *agapao*, in John’s gospel *agape* (love), Jesus defines earlier in the gospel “Greater *agape* (love) hath no man than to lay down his life for his friends.” So sacrificial love is the highest form of love, it’s the highest form of charity. And so that’s what Jesus is calling Peter to here. He’s going to lay down his life for the sake of the gospel. And he’s going to follow Jesus all the way to the cross. And sure enough, if you look at the living tradition of the church, St. Jerome in his wonderful book, *The Lives of Illustrious Men* — it’s kind of like a collection of biographies of the Apostles — he actually tells us how Peter met his end. So, I’m going to quote from it in just a second, but remember, Jerome was one of the early Church Fathers. He was living in the late 4th Century, early 5th Century. He was a priest, he spent a lot of time in Rome, he eventually moved to Bethlehem, where he became the great translator of the Bible into Latin. The Latin Vulgate that we still use to this day (in the Catholic Church), is based on Jerome’s translation of the scriptures. And he’s considered a Doctor of the Church. And in his book *The Lives of Illustrious Men*, he actually gives a little short biography of all of the various Apostles, and that’s one of the chief sources of information that we have for how the Apostles met their end, because apart from this fleeting reference in the Gospel of John, we don’t ever have a narration of Peter’s martyrdom in the New Testament. It’s never narrated, it’s never described. But this is what Jerome tells us:

Simon Peter the son of John... pushed on to Rome in the second year of Claudius to over-throw Simon Magus, and held the sacerdotal chair there for twenty-five years until the last, that is the fourteenth, year of Nero. *At*

his hands [meaning, Nero's hands] he received the crown of martyrdom being nailed to the cross with his head towards the ground and his feet raised on high, asserting that he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord.²

That's from Jerome's *The Lives of Illustrious Men*, chapter 1. The first chapter is on Jesus. So if you've ever wondered, "Where do we get the belief that Peter was crucified upside-down?" Well we get it in part from early Christian historians and saints like St. Jerome, a Doctor of the Church. Who by the way, also tells us that St. Paul was martyred in Rome under Caesar Nero by decapitation on the same day as Peter. And that's why (to this day) the Church celebrates on June 29th, the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, the feast of their martyrdom together, the great Apostle to the Jews and to the Gentiles being martyred by the pagan king on the same day. And this prophecy of Jesus in chapter 21 of John's gospel is an anticipation of that eventual crucifixion. And in fact, some scholars have argued that one of the reasons you can infer that John's gospel was written after Peter had died is because he appears to already know when he says, "this was to show by what death he was to glorify God." It seems to be written after the fact of Peter's actual martyrdom and death, although that's a debated point. It's a reasonable inference from the text.

So, okay, so that's Peter. That's the gospel for today. Lots there, and we didn't even talk about all of it. But we've got to move on. So we're going to go back to the 1st reading for today, which is again from the Acts of the Apostles. Throughout the Easter season, we're going to keep looking at the gospel spreading in the early Church. And in this case, it's the story of the Apostles before the Sanhedrin. In Acts 5:27-32:

And when they [meaning the captain and the officers] had brought them [meaning the Apostles], they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and for-

² Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 1

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

Then the lectionary skips several verses and goes down to the middle of verse 40 which says this:

...when they [the Sanhedrin] had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

Okay, this text here continues the story of the Apostles in the early Church. Not only did they evangelize in the city of Jerusalem, but one of the results of their evangelism was that they were brought before the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, or the Jerusalem Council, which is the same group of elders and chief priests that tried Jesus and sentenced him to death for blasphemy in the gospel. So, in a sense, you notice what they're doing, they're not just recapitulating the life and miracles and teachings of Jesus, they're also recapitulating (or undergoing in their own lives) the persecution, the rejection and the opposition that Jesus had experienced from the leaders of the Jewish people in the city of Jerusalem. So when the Apostles are brought before the council (or the Sanhedrin), what are they charged with? They tell them to shut up. "We've strictly charged you not to teach in this name." Notice, they don't even say the name of Jesus, they just say "this name". And you'll see this throughout early Church history, the power of the name of Jesus; the power of bringing the name of Jesus into the act of evangelization.

And maybe you've even had this experience yourself. It's one thing to talk about God. Lots of people can talk about God. But once you get specific and talk about Jesus, the savior, where Jesus is the lord, it changes the dynamics of the conversation. It brings a certain power, a certain demand into the conversation, because of the things that Jesus of Nazareth claimed about himself. So they charged the disciples, "Stop speaking in this name." I love the Apostles response here. They say, "We must obey God rather than men." In other words, "We'd like to obey your command, but sorry, we have to obey God first." And so, their evangelism here is rooted in obedience to God, and also they say, "We are witnesses." The Greek word there, *martures* (or *martus*), it means a witness, but it's the word from which we get "martyr", someone who bears witness to the Good News even onto death. So we see here the Apostles are very different from how they were when Jesus first appeared to them after the Resurrection. Think about the difference. After the Res-

urrection, they're hiding, they're afraid, but once they've received the holy spirit at Pentecost, they're given the gift of courage, of fortitude, to go out and to be witnesses, to be martyrs, to speak the name of Jesus boldly and without fear, and to never be ashamed of the gospel. To never be ashamed of the cross. To never be ashamed of the name of Jesus Christ. We see a radical transformation that takes place. The same Peter who had denied Jesus during the Passion narrative, and the same disciples who all fled while Jesus was being crucified, now rejoice that they're able to suffer for the sake of the name. For the sake of the name of Christ.

Alright, in closing I'd like to just end then with one last quote from *The Living Tradition* on the role of Peter in the Church. As you might know, the authority of Peter and the authority of his successors (the bishops of Rome, whom we call the Popes), has been a very hotly contested issue, not just between Protestants and Catholics, but also between Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox (between the Greek Orthodox and Russian Orthodox). Since the 11th Century there's been a great schism between the eastern and western Churches which involves, in part, the question of the primacy and the authority and the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome (the successor of Peter). And of course we don't have space to go into that whole debate, but I do think it's really important here to share with you the fact that in the early Church, even in the Eastern Church Fathers (those who were writing in Greek and who were living in the Eastern Churches, that were very far removed from Rome), there was still a widespread recognition of the primacy of Peter, and the authority that was given to him over not just his particular diocese or his particular Church, but over the universal church (the church as a whole). And so, I'll give you a quote here. This is from St. John Chrysostom, who (I know I said St. Cyril of Jerusalem was my favorite Church Father to read. I think he's my favorite to introduce people to the writings of the early fathers), but my favorite to read just for the sheer beauty and grandeur of his writing is St. John Chrysostom. And he again was living in the late 4th Century and he was the bishop of Constantinople, which was one of the major cities in the eastern part of the empire. So he was no small fry, St. John Chrysostom is highly revered in the east and he's considered a Doctor of the Church in the west. He's a Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church. And this is what he said in his homilies on the gospel of John. So I want you to imagine, he's bishop of Constantinople, he's preaching in Greek to this church in the east in the late 4th early 5th Century, and this is what John Chrysostom had to say:

And why, having passed by the others, does He speak with Peter on these matters? *He was the chosen one of the Apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the leader of the band...* And at the same time to show him that he must now be of good cheer, since the denial was done away, *Jesus puts into his hands the chief authority among the brethren...* ³

So notice what Chrysostom is saying. He's talking here about the very passage that we read today, the story of Jesus appearing to Peter by the Sea of Galilee and asking him three times, "Do you love me?" And then making him shepherd. And what John Chrysostom is saying is, "Jesus is giving Peter chief authority among the brethren." That means not just over his own flock, but among the Apostles themselves. And there's another quote here, Chrysostom goes on to say in the same section:

"And when He had spoken this, He says, Follow Me." (John 20:19) Here again He alludes to his tender carefulness, and to his [Peter's] being very closely attached to Himself. And if any should say, How then did James receive the chair at Jerusalem? *I would make this reply, that He appointed Peter teacher, not of the chair, but of the world.* ⁴

Now that's a really strong quote. Notice what Chrysostom is saying here. Sometimes people will say, "Well wait, Peter wasn't the head of the Church." Because if you look at the local church in Jerusalem, when they have a council in Jerusalem in Acts 15, James steps up and he acts as leader, and he kind of speaks on behalf of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. And what Chrysostom's response to that is, "Yes, James was given the seat or the episcopal see (meaning the seat of authority) to lead the church in Jerusalem, but the reason Peter wasn't given leadership of the church of Jerusalem is because he was given leadership of the church in the whole world. In other words, Peter is the universal shepherd over the church as a whole. And if you look at the Greek word for "according to the whole", *kata holos*, it is the Catholic Church (or the universal church). And so we believe (as Catholics), and ancient Christians in the east like Chrysostom believed, that when Jesus made

³ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 88:1

⁴ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 88:1

Peter shepherd of the flock, he made him not just chief of the Apostles, but shepherd over the universal church. Not just the west, but also the east.