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q. 727 Midday Prayers - 961

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PREFACE

Pascal Kyrie (Stephan 27)  
Haec Dies (Stephan)  
This Joyful Eastertide  
HIV.E. 1126  
24 25

"This is the day the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia." <sup>return today with a different perspective from last Thurs. week, or</sup>

The kind of "extra" chapter at the end of St John's gospel, <sup>it's</sup> about the resurrection appearance of Jesus in Galilee, to a group of His disciples who'd gone fishing for the night, and in the early morning light discovered a stranger and friend on the lakeshore. It is, perhaps, for many people their "favourite" Easter scene, and it's received a lot of attention because of important details in the story, and some mysterious ones too. Peter and some others had fished all night and caught nothing. In the morning, Jesus stood on the shore and called out directions to them which netted 153 fish. He had bread and fish baking on a fire. As He shared his breakfast with them, Jesus three times asked Peter if he loved Him, and three times instructed Peter to tend his flock. Then He told Peter to follow Him — and the church already knew what that meant: for, Peter had been crucified already before this chapter of St John's gospel was written. <sup>clearly</sup> But there was much else in the story the church was not sure about, because this appendix is heavily symbolic. The bread that Jesus had prepared is the Bread from Heaven: the fish is "Ichthys" in Greek, the letters of the word standing for the initials of "Jesus Christ, God's Son, the Saviour": they were standing on Galilee's shore, fishers of men; the net didn't break, because the church will endure for ever. And more along the same lines.... <sup>for</sup> Early Christian theologians had a field day with St John. For example, St Jerome in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century thought that the 153 fish meant that some people would be chosen from each race, since there are exactly 153 species of fish — scholars have identified the Greek book that Jerome was quoting for this information, but not the actual quotation. And so opinions have gone on, about the meaning of these things, most of which are still discussed. But there's really only one opinion about the meaning of Jesus' asking Peter 3 times

whether he loves Him and 3 times instructing him to tend His flock. Ulan the 2nd Vatican Council quoted ed 21 of St John in summarising Jesus' conferring of the primacy on Peter, it was only following the common opinion in Christendom. Of course, opinions differ immediately on what this "primacy" means: but the lively discussion should not obscure an important truth: Jesus was conferring authority and connecting it with love. Why was this? — the answer lies in Christ Himself, in how he was and had authority, and how He exercised it. "Though He was in the form of God, He did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at." Rather, he poured Himself out. "All power in heaven and on earth was His," but He chose to live truly powerless, even though the task set before Him was without any comparison the simple most important task ever to be performed by any among us. No doubt that, being God, He could have imposed on all His victory over sin and death, so that no human being again would ever sin or die the final death. Power is being able to decide without consulting others' opinions or even interests, in such ways as to change the context of their decision or to force decision on them. Couldn't Christ have arranged everything His way? He didn't in fact — and really, given God's choice to leave human beings free, He couldn't have. Power takes freedom away: but Christ came to make us free. So, while He taught with authority, He didn't rule with power. What's authority, then? To be able to mediate human achievements to others in such a way as to make it possible for them to respond, invited to accept those achievements freely and enter into them. So a teacher mediates for his/her students whose thought is shaped by the achievements they accept: a parent shows a child s'th. which makes the child learn to love. Now, Jesus Christ is Himself humanity's unique = greatest achievement. He is reconciliation with God through victory over sin.

Before Him we lived in darkness : now we live in light. He is the way into life which is specifically human — body & soul, earth & spirit — yet is a mysterious sharing of God's proper divine life. But Jesus, having been lifted up both on the cross & in the resurrection for our sakes, draws all people to Himself by the transparency of His love. As He is the destiny God hoped for humankind, so He is also the mediator of that fate, the one mediator. In Him we live & move & have our being. | Pray over that while, as we take a break

DER.E.10, 12

from that reflection on ch 21 of St John, and listen to this Easter Hymn : MUSIC (Now Green Blade)

PRAYERS

Our Mediator

has chosen that, in His time between, we should mediate His accomplishments to one another, each in a unique way to some other, each to each according to occasion and sacred event. If we don't announce Him to one another, showing His love in our lives & so teaching Him with authority, then He will not be announced or taught where we are and in our time. The function of all authority in the church is thus to mediate Christ's accomplishments to others, so that seeing it & Him, they will freely choose life. We cannot do this by power, to make someone's decision for them. || Resorting to power may sometimes seem imperative for parent or priest, pope or teacher : but we must keep in mind that this is borrowing really, from another world. Rather, if we mediate Christ to one another it will be because we so transparently love Him and, lifted up both in sorrow and in joy, we show authoritatively how beautiful is what He is doing, and who He is. "Do you love me? Feed my sheep." . . . no wonder theologians & spiritual people have spent so much time on the apparition on the morning shore in Galilee.