

Representing earthly beings, they continually praise God as ruler of history (or time). He will restore (or liberate) creation ("is to come", 4:8). They are joined by the "elders" (4:10), representing heavenly beings, who acknowledge God's superior power by placing their crowns "before the throne" – that all power comes from God. Next a "scroll" (5:1) is presented – a record of God's plans for the end-time: see Daniel 10:21. No one is found worthy to open the scroll and reveal its contents (5:3), but finally, one is revealed, "a Lamb" (5:6), representing Christ. In a scene reminiscent of the honours given to a Roman emperor, large numbers sing of Christ's worthiness to disclose God's plans. There are seven honours he is worthy to receive (5:12): the first four ("power ... might") concern his dominion; the others express the adoration of those present. The "Lamb" and the Creator ("the one", 5:13) are equal in majesty. All creatures in heaven and on earth certify this to be true ("Amen", 5:14).

**John 21:1,4-23**

Since his resurrection, Jesus has twice appeared to the disciples in the house where he hosted the Last Supper. Now he appears to six disciples near the Sea of Galilee ("Tiberias", v. 1). Led by Peter, they go fishing but catch nothing. When they return to the shore in the morning, Jesus is there. When he invites them to cast their net again, they catch many fish (v. 6). One (probably John) recognizes him now (v. 7); the others do later. V. 10 looks odd, for some fish is already on the fire (v. 9), but it leads into the eucharistic scene in vv. 12-13. In John 6, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, Jesus has blessed a meal of bread and fish. (The significance of "a hundred [and] fifty-three", v. 11, is unknown.) Jesus asks Peter about his love for him (v. 15). Peter avoids comparisons with "these", the other disciples. Jesus asks three times – a reversal of Peter's denial of him; each time Jesus tells him: feed/tend my lambs/sheep. V. 18 begins with a proverbial saying: in old age, we lack the mobility and freedom of movement we had when young. But Peter's life will be cut short: he will either be bound a prisoner, or be crucified ("stretch out ..."). In 13:37-38, Peter offers to follow Jesus even to laying down his life for him. Now Jesus says: "Follow me" (v. 19). Tradition says that Peter was crucified too.  
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# The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter 2022 (Year C)

**Collect** Risen Christ, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope: strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

**Suggested Hymns** - For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

1) All people that on Earth do dwell.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmGwHdNtpEw>

2) Jesus lives! Thy terrors now

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYaOHEGgGCE>

3) Now is eternal life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kwqi-jr2RNE>

4) **Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem (292)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNQOcpECK4A>

## Acts 9.1-6

Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.'

## Psalms 30

I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,  
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,  
and you have healed me.

O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,  
restored me to life from among those  
gone down to the Pit.

Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,  
and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger is but for a moment;  
his favour is for a lifetime.

Weeping may linger for the night,  
but joy comes with the morning.

As for me, I said in my prosperity,  
'I shall never be moved.'

By your favour, O Lord,  
you had established me as a strong mountain;  
you hid your face; I was dismayed.

To you, O Lord, I cried,  
and to the Lord I made supplication:

'What profit is there in my death,  
if I go down to the Pit?

Will the dust praise you?

Will it tell of your faithfulness?

Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me!  
O Lord, be my helper!

You have turned my mourning into dancing;  
you have taken off my sackcloth  
and clothed me with joy,

so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.

O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you for ever.

### Revelation 5.11-14

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, 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!'

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 for ever and ever!' And the four living creatures said, 'Amen!'

And the elders fell down and worshipped.

### John 21.1-19

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Just after daybreak, as the disciples were fishing, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' 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. 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 lake. 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.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish 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 though there were so many, the net was not torn. 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. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared 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.' 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. 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.' (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.' Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, 'Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?' When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about him?' 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?'

### Post Communion Prayer

Living God, your Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in all his redeeming work; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

### Commentary

#### Acts 9:1-6,(7-20)

Luke has told us, in Acts 8:3, that in Jerusalem "Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison." Now we see his great transformation: from persecutor to evangelist. At the time, Jews often had two names: a Semitic one ("Saul", v. 1) and a Roman or Greek one (Paul). A scholar says that the Empire granted Jews the right to extradite their own from beyond Palestine. Those "who belonged to the Way" (v. 2) were Jewish Christians; they worshipped in synagogues. In the early days, Christianity was known as "the Way". Paul later called the glory of God (or Christ) a "light" (v. 3). Vv. 4-5 make it clear that in persecuting members of the Christian flock, Paul persecuted Christ. In v. 7, the Greek suggests that Saul's companions heard the sound of the voice but not what was said. God commands "Ananias" (v. 10), a leader of the followers in Damascus, to seek out Saul to restore his sight. Naturally, Ananias is fearful, Saul being a known enemy of Christians. In today's terminology, God might say that he had chosen Paul as a medium to convey his message (v. 15). He will "suffer" (v. 16), as Jesus told the eleven apostles they would. Through Ananias, God restores Paul's sight; Paul receives the Holy Spirit and is baptised, thus becoming a member of the Church.

#### Psalm 30

The psalmist clearly praises God for his recovery from grave illness, but this psalm may also be allegorical: its title says that it was sung at the dedication of the Temple, which was desecrated in 164 BC and rededicated in 161 BC. "Sheol", "the Pit", (v. 3) was thought of as a place under the earth where the dead existed as mere shadows. In vv. 4-5, the psalmist invites all present to join in giving thanks. In vv. 6-10, he recounts what happened to him. He had felt perfectly secure and healthy (v. 6), but he fell from God's favour (God "hid", v. 7, from him) – he became ill. Feeling near death, he prayed to God, pointing out that if allowed to go the Sheol, no one, not even God, could hear him. God did hear his prayer and restored him to health and favour (vv. 11-12): his sorrow was turned to joy, even to liturgical "dancing". He will praise God for the rest of his life.

#### Revelation 5:11-14

This book is an inspired picture-book, intended to make a powerful appeal to the reader's imagination. Using a literary genre known as apocalyptic, John gives us an insight into what will occur at the end of the current era. In his vision, he sees God's throne and the heavenly scene around it and hears the praises sung there. He describes the glory of God in terms of precious gems (4:3). Around God's throne are "twenty-four elders" (4:4, perhaps the twelve Old Testament patriarchs and the twelve apostles), so an image of the ideal Church. As in a Roman court, God's counsellors are "seated": they share in ruling and judging. "Lightning" (4:5) and "thunder" express God's majesty.

The "seven spirits" before the throne may be the seven angels of high rank, as in 1 Enoch, a non-biblical apocalyptic book. Tobit 12:15 speaks of Raphael as "one of the seven angels who ... enter before ... the glory of the Lord". The "sea of glass" (4:6), a valuable commodity in John's day, suggests the distance between humans and God, even in heaven. The "four living creatures" around the throne are angelic beings representing the whole of creation (Ezekiel 1:5, 10); they are God's agents who watch over all of nature (Ezekiel 1:18, 10:12), and symbolize what is most splendid about animals: nobility (lion), strength (ox), wisdom (human), and oversight (eagle).