

Ken Overberg, S.J.  
Third Sunday of Easter, May 5, 2019

During this Easter season, we are proclaiming the Acts of the Apostles, the book of Revelation, and the Gospel of John.

It is important to remember that the Acts of the Apostles is not exact history. It is a proclamation of faith that sounds like history. Acts is the second volume of a two-volume work; the first volume is the Gospel of Luke. Some scholars judge that this two-volume work was written around 85 C.E., though recently other scholars have suggested some years later. Acts is a creative story about religious truth—the truth that the Spirit led the development of the early Christian community, the truth that the good news of Jesus is for all people, Jew and Gentile. Of course, the first disciples had to speak and travel and touch people's lives in order for the Gospel to spread. Acts offers an idyllic account of this process. Today's passage speaks of their troubles with the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem.

The Book of Revelation was written by John of Patmos (who is neither the apostle nor the evangelist) for the early Christian communities in what we now call Turkey. The book addressed the real life of their day near the end of the first century, not some unknown future, using symbols and visions to encourage hope and perseverance in the midst of persecution, as we hear in today's passage.

Today's gospel describes the wonderful scene of breakfast with Jesus at the seashore. As with other resurrection stories, at first the disciples don't recognize Jesus but then they do. The scene includes the rehabilitation of Peter.

Let's listen to God's word!

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Breakfast with Jesus at the seashore! Sounds pretty wonderful, doesn't it? Scripture scholars tell us that the language John uses here is Eucharistic. So we too can meet the risen Jesus today—if not at the seashore, here at Bellarmine.

That breakfast also came with a challenging invitation: Follow me! This final chapter of John's gospel was added after the death of the Beloved Disciple (the key and anonymous disciple in this gospel) and after Peter's death. So Jesus' final command to Peter—"Follow me"—is seen as a summons to martyrdom.

We too have been called by Jesus; we too have heard "Follow me." Surely for us that does not mean a dramatic death by crucifixion, but just as surely it means a life of love and service, a life of faithful discipleship—with its blessings and costs. And a life nourished by the Eucharist.

What might "Follow me" mean for you this Easter season?