**The Revd Dr Ian McIntosh, Director of Mission and Ministry, reflects on John 21.1-19 for the Third Sunday of Easter. 4th May.**

Easter is about seeing things differently. The late Pope Francis exemplified this in a life committed to the care of creation; of choosing intentionally to live in simple accommodation, to drive a small car, and to be seen washing and kissing the feet of prisoners. He saw things differently because he chose to respond to the grace of God that he discovered in the very poorest in our world, and he had to overcome all the ways that he'd been conditioned to see things another way.

Easter is a time of seeing things differently, because in the light of Jesus’s resurrection from the dead, everything now looks different. And yet, I'm really heartened by the fact that many of Jesus’s closest friends found seeing differently really hard. Those who came to the tomb early on Easter Day looked in the wrong place for Jesus, Mary mistook Jesus for the gardener until he said her name, and those who walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus did not know to whom they were speaking.

In today's gospel, the disciples are back in Galilee. They've returned to the work of fishing, which is what they were doing when Jesus first called them three years before. They must have felt on one level that nothing had changed; they'd been fishing all night, they’d caught nothing. Then, at those daybreak hours, when they’re utterly exhausted and demoralised, a stranger points out the obvious, they’ve caught nothing. Their private reactions are not recorded, but they can't have been very pleased. Yet something in the encounter leads them to follow the stranger’s advice, “Cast your nets on the other side,” and the result is an abundance that their nets can hardly retain.

As a gospel writer, John plays with an image of seeing and looking throughout the gospel. Perhaps his point here is to remind us that we do so often look in the wrong places for the life of God, which is so often closer than we think.

For the disciples, it was literally on the other side of the boat. This kind of story is echoed throughout the ages of countless people whose lives have been transformed by Christ because they've been able to see things differently. Crippling anxiety has been replaced by hope, a hatred which eats somebody up has been replaced by a valuing of another.

But what I find so encouraging about this story is the reminder that we need other people to help us to see what God is doing. That's why the life of following Christ is never just a matter of Christ and me, it's about Christ and us. We need each other to help spot what God is doing. For many of us, this is what we receive from being part of the church or a home group. It comes out of the stories of experiences we hear from people who've undertaken the Mustard Seed Stepping Up year, or those who deepen their discipleship in our diocesan Foundations in Ministry programme, that it is others who help us to see differently, to discern what it is that God is calling us to be and to do.

However, the challenging Easter call of the risen Christ remains one to each of us: how are we to see differently? What is it that God is calling you to see differently this Easter?

Let us pray. Risen Lord Jesus, we thank you that in the light of your resurrection, everything looks different. We thank you for those who help us to see your life and to see things differently. Give us the courage to see you and to follow you. Give us the grace to recognise you in the lives of the poorest, in the places we least expect it. We thank you for those people who help us and set an example of seeing things differently. We thank you most especially for the life of Pope Francis. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.