



## Third Sunday of Easter Year C

### Greg Kandra

#### Lectionary 48:

Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41

Ps 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13

Rev 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/050425.cfm>

#### Possible preaching themes:

- Gospel: Jesus's two words 2,000 years ago echo to us today: "**Follow me.**" What does this mean? What are the contributions of the psychology of following and of leadership
- Gospel: At the end of this Gospel we return to almost the beginning of the first Gospel, to the **seashore with fishermen** (Mark 1:16) . Why is this significant? Is there something about the psychology of the seashore or the psychology of fishing at work here?
- Acts: The **courage and "rejoicing" of the Apostles** in the face of punishment and possible martyrdom

#### Possible scientific resources

- Following and leadership:
  - The Science Behind Why People Follow the Crowd  
<https://blogs.cornell.edu/info2040/2019/11/24/reasons-behind-why-people-follow-the-crowd/>
  - Why people follow the leader [https://hbr.org/2004/09/why-people-follow-the-leader-the-power-of-transference?utm\\_source=pocket\\_mylist](https://hbr.org/2004/09/why-people-follow-the-leader-the-power-of-transference?utm_source=pocket_mylist)
  - Why People Follow Influencers  
[https://displaypurposes.com/blog/why-people-follow-influencers-what-makes-people-follow-you/?utm\\_source=pocket\\_mylist](https://displaypurposes.com/blog/why-people-follow-influencers-what-makes-people-follow-you/?utm_source=pocket_mylist)
  - The New Psychology of Leadership  
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-new-psychology-of-leadership-2007-08/>

- Psychological impact of the seashore, beaches and fishing
  - The psychology of the beach <https://morrispsych.com/the-psychology-of-the-beach-by-dr-kenneth-freundlich/>
  - How the beach benefits your brain <https://www.inc.com/anne-gherini/howbeach-benefits-your-brain-according-to-science.html>
  - How the beach can change our brains and mental health <https://www.lifehack.org/408837/science-explains-how-the-beach-can-change-our-brains-and-mental-health>
  - Why fishing is good for your mental health <https://notsealed.com/psychology-of-fishing-and-why-it-is-good-for-your-health.html>
  - One psychologist writes a book on the psychology of fishing <https://keokeebooks.com/products-page/flyfishing-and-running/pavlovstrout-the-incomplete-psychology-of-fishing/>

## Homily outline on “Follow me”

- **Introduction: What is Jesus saying?**
  - We seem to have come full circle. At the end of John’s Gospel, the last gospel, we find ourselves at the very beginning of the first gospel, Mark (1:16): at the seashore, with men fishing.
- And Jesus’s final words in this passage echo exactly some of his first words in the Markan gospel and the first chapter of this Gospel: “Follow me” (1:17)
- In these weeks after Easter, it may sound like he is stating the obvious and that the author is framing this gospel this way to drive home a central message of discipleship.
- But maybe there is more to those two words. What is Christ actually asking his disciples, and us in turn, to do?
- What it does it mean to follow?
- **The Science: Leadership and Why We Follow** ○ “Follow me” is a mantra on social media today. On Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, influence and importance is often measured by how many “followers” someone has.
  - Among various theories, social media experts cite two key reasons why they believe we follow people online:
    - We want to achieve what they have achieved. We see their lives or their work as aspirational and we want to be like them.
    - We like their personal traits and find them appealing. We are attracted to who they are and what they represent.
    - ([https://displaypurposes.com/blog/why-people-follow-influencerswhat-makes-people-follow-you/?utm\\_source=pocket\\_mylist](https://displaypurposes.com/blog/why-people-follow-influencerswhat-makes-people-follow-you/?utm_source=pocket_mylist))
  - Psychologists have long known that we are social creatures. We need to band together. We need one another to survive and thrive — and to continue a

way of life, profess what we value, pass on what we believe.)  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-bandwagon-effect-2795895>

- **The Power of Leadership** ○ This explains our human hunger to follow — but the act of following also demands that we actually have someone to follow. A leader. ○ Management experts and psychologists like to draw up lists of various qualities people look for in leaders — integrity, empathy, courage. But one list mentioned something unexpected: service. The good leader has the ability to serve others.  
<https://nlctb.org/tips/7-traits-of-emotionallyintelligent-leaders/>
  - Recent research suggests that an important quality of a leader is his or her ability to build followers through the power of words, especially in defining social identity. A Scientific American study found that for leadership to function well, leaders and followers must be bound by a shared identity and by the quest to use that identity as a blueprint for action.  
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-new-psychology-ofleadership-2007-08/>
  - But what does all this tell us about being followers of Jesus Christ? What does this tell us about discipleship?
- **The Takeaway: Christ's Bold Message for Us Today** ○ These notions of following and leadership resonate with us in one way or another because they also hold true for following Jesus Christ.
  - Christian discipleship calls out to us to follow a singular figure of integrity, courage, and purpose.
  - For 20 centuries, people have been drawn to this figure for his message of mercy, compassion, justice, and love.
  - But that is just the beginning. ○ To be a follower of Christ demands even more. Commitment. Sacrifice. Surrender. Maybe even martyrdom.
  - What type of followers does Jesus seek? Authentic, dedicated, passionate.
  - Christ's invitation — "Follow me" — transcends simple psychology or patterns of human behavior. It goes beyond the easy temptations, clicks and links of social media. It is about following more than person, but following a call to live differently, act differently, interact differently. It is nothing less than a call to conversion of life and heart.

**Tags:** discipleship, leadership, psychology, social media

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### About the Preaching with the Sciences Initiative

A primary way Roman Catholics explore their faith and nourish their spirituality is by participating in Sunday Mass and actively engaging in the homily. However, few preachers explicitly connect faith or spirituality with

science. The Preaching with the Sciences initiative, made possible by a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation, gathers scientists and leading homileticians to explore the positive contributions science can make to preaching, and consequently contribute to more contemporary modes of believing. Such contributions are grounded in the rich imaginations that scientists bring to their work as well as in scientific discoveries that have a potential for revealing religious truths and even shedding new insight on ancient teachings and beliefs.

With guidance from world-renowned scientists with differing areas of expertise, a select number of homileticians will draft homily outlines for preaching key Sundays and feast days across the 3-year lectionary cycle. Over 100 homily outlines will highlight some of the way's sciences and the contemporary search for religious meaning can interface. These free homiletic resources have the potential to influence thousands of preachers seeking help each week in crafting sermons and helping to shape a scientifically informed religious imagination among future preachers.