

John: 21:1–14

From Catena Aurea:

1. After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.
2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.
3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.
4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.
5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.
6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.
7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.
8. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.
9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.
10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.
11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxii) The preceding words of the Evangelist seem to indicate the end of the book; but He goes on farther to give an account of our Lord's appearance by the sea of Tiberias: After these things Jesus shewed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lxxxvii) He says, Afterwards, because He did not go continually with His disciples as before; and, manifested Himself, because His body being incorruptible, it was a condescension to allow Himself to be seen. He mentions the place, to shew that our Lord had taken away a good deal of their fear, and that they no longer kept within doors, though they had gone to Galilee to avoid the persecution of the Jews.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lxxxvii) As our Lord was not with them regularly, and the Spirit was not given them, and they had received no commission, and had nothing to do, they followed the trade of fishermen: And on this wise shewed He Himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee; he who was called by Philip, and the sons of Zebedee, i. e. James and John, and two other of His disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxii) If the disciples had done this after the death of Jesus, and before His resurrection, we should have imagined that they did it in despair. But now after that He has risen from the grave, after seeing the marks of His wounds, after receiving, by means of His breathing, the Holy Ghost, all at once they become what they were before, fishers, not of men, but of fishes. We must remember then that they were not forbidden by their Apostleship from earning their livelihood by a lawful craft, provided they had no other means of living. For if the blessed Paul used not that power which he had with the rest of the preachers of the Gospel, as they did, but went a warfare upon his own resources, lest the Gentiles, who were aliens from the name of Christ, might be offended at a doctrine apparently venal; if, educated in another way, he learnt a craft he never knew before, that, while the teacher worked with his own hands, the hearer might not be burdened; much more might Peter, who had been a fisherman, work at what he knew, if he had nothing else to live upon at the time. But how had he not, some one will ask, when our Lord promises, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you? (Matt. 6:33) Our Lord, we answer, fulfilled this promise, by bringing them the fishes to catch: for who else brought them? He did not bring upon them that poverty which obliged them to go fishing, except in order to exhibit a miracle¹.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lxxxvii) The other disciples followed Peter: They say unto him, We also go with thee; for from this time they were all bound together; and they wished too to see the fishing: They went forth

and entered into a ship immediately. And that night they caught nothing. They fished in the night, from fear.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lxxxvii) In the midst of their labour and distress, Jesus presented Himself to them: But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. He did not make Himself known to them immediately, but entered into conversation; and first He speaks after human fashion: Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? as if He wished to beg some of them. They answered, No. He then gives them a sign to know Him by: And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. The recognition of Him brings out Peter and John in their different tempers of mind; the one fervid, the other sublime; the one ready, the other penetrating. John is the first to recognise our Lord: Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord; Peter is the first to come to Him: Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto Him, for he was naked.

THEOPHYLACT. Peter's girding himself is a sign of modesty. He girt himself with a linen coat, such as Thasian and Tyrian fishermen throw over them, when they have nothing else on, or even over their other clothes.

GLOSS. A parenthesis; for it follows, dragging the net with fishes. The order is, The other disciples came in a little ship, dragging the net with fishes.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lxxxvii) Another miracle follows: As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. He no longer works upon already existing materials, but in a still more wonderful way; shewing that it was only in condescension¹ that He wrought His miracles upon existing matter before His crucifixion.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxii) We must not understand that the bread was laid on the coals, but read it as if it stood, They saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on the coals; and they saw bread.

THEOPHYLACT. To shew that it was no vision, He bade them take of the fish they had caught. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Another miracle follows; viz. that the net was not broken by the number of fish: Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxii) Mystically, in the draught of fishes He signified the mystery¹ of the Church, such as it will be at the final resurrection of the dead. And to make this clearer, it is put near the end of the book. The number seven, which is the number of the disciples who were fishing, signifies the end of time; for time is counted by periods of seven days.

THEOPHYLACT. In the night time before the presence of the sun, Christ, the Prophets took nothing; for though they endeavoured to correct the people, yet these often fell into idolatry.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxii) The shore is the end of the sea, and therefore signifies the end of the world. The Church is here typified as she will be at the end of the world, just as other draughts of fishes typified her as she is now. Jesus before did not stand on the shore, but went into a ship which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. In a former draught the nets are not thrown to the right, or to the left, so that the good or the bad should be typified alone, but indifferently: Let down your nets for a draught, (Luke 5:4) meaning that the good and bad were mixed together. But here it is, Cast the net on the right side of the ship; to signify those who should stand on the right hand, the good. The one our Lord did at the beginning of His ministry, the other after His resurrection, shewing therein that the former draught of fishes signified the mixture of bad and good, which composes the Church at present; the latter the good alone, which it will contain in eternity, when the world is ended, and the resurrection of the dead completed. But they who belong to the resurrection of life, i. e. to the right hand, and are caught within the net of the Christian name, shall only appear on the shore, i. e. at the end of the world, after the resurrection: wherefore they were not able to draw the net into the ship, and unload the fishes, as they were before. The Church keeps these of the right hand, after death, in the sleep of peace, as it were in the deep, till the net come to shore. That the first draught was taken in two little ships, the last two hundred cubits from land, a hundred and a hundred, typifies, I think, the two classes of elect, circumcised and uncircumcised.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxii) In the draught before, the number of the fishes is not mentioned, as if in fulfilment of the prophecy in the Psalm, If I should declare them, and speak of them, they should be more than I am able to express; (Ps. 41:7) but here there is a certain number mentioned, which we must explain. The number which signifies the law is ten, from the ten Commandments. But when to the law is joined grace, to the letter spirit, the number seven is brought in, that being the number which represents the Holy Spirit, to Whom sanctification properly belongs. For sanctification was first heard of in the law, with respect to the seventh day; and Isaiah praises the Holy Spirit for His sevenfold work and office. The

seven of the Spirit added to the ten of the law make seventeen; and the numbers from one up to seventeen when added together, make a hundred and fifty-three.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxii) It is not then signified that only a hundred and fifty-three saints are to rise again to eternal life, but this number represents all who partake of the grace of the Holy Spirit: which number too contains three fifties, and three over, with reference to the mystery of the Trinity. And the number fifty is made up of seven sevens, and one in addition, signifying that those sevens are one. That they were great fishes too, is not without meaning. For when our Lord says, I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil, by giving, that is, the Holy Spirit through Whom the law can be fulfilled, He says almost immediately after, Whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. In the first draught the net was broken, to signify schisms; but here to shew that in that perfect peace of the blessed there would be no schisms, the Evangelist continues: And for all they were so great¹, yet was not the net broken; as if alluding to the case before, in which it was broken, and making a favourable comparison.

21:12–14

12. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxiii) The fishing being over, our Lord invites them to dine: Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lxxxvi) John does not say that He ate with them, but Luke does. He ate however not to satisfy the wants of nature, but to shew the reality of His resurrection.

AUGUSTINE. (xiii. de Civ. Dei, c. xxii) The bodies of the just, when they rise again, shall need neither the word of life that they die not of disease, or old age, nor any bodily nourishment to prevent hunger and thirst. For they shall be endowed with a sure and inviolable gift of immortality, that they shall not eat of necessity, but only be able to eat if they will. Not the power, but the need of eating and drinking shall be

taken away from them; in like manner as our Saviour after His resurrection took meat and drink with His disciples, with spiritual but still real flesh, not for the sake of nourishment, but in exercise of a power.

And none of His disciples durst ask Him, who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxii) No one dared to doubt that it was He, much less deny it; so evident was it. Had any one doubted, he would have asked.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lxxxvii) He means that they had not confidence to talk to Him, as before, but sat looking at Him in silence and awe, absorbed in regarding His altered and now supernatural form, and unwilling to ask any question. Knowing that it was the Lord, they were in fear, and only ate what, in exercise of His great power, He had created. He again does not look up to heaven, or do any thing after a human sort, thus shewing that His former acts of that kind were done only in condescension: Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxiii. 2) Mystically, the fried fish is Christ Who suffered. And He is the bread that came down from heaven. To Him the Church is united to His body for participation of eternal bliss. Wherefore He says, Bring of the fishes which ye have now caught; to signify that all of us who have this hope, and are in that septenary number of disciples, which represents the universal Church here, partake of this great sacrament, and are admitted to this bliss.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. lxxxvii) Inasmuch, however, as He did not converse with them regularly, or in the same way as before, the Evangelist adds, This is now the third time that Jesus shewed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. cxxiii. 3) Which has reference not to manifestations, but to days; i. e. the first day after He had risen, eight days after that, when Thomas saw and believed, and this day at the draught of fishes; and thenceforward as often as He saw them, up to the time of His ascension.

AUGUSTINE. (de Con. Evang. iii. 25.) We find in the four Evangelists ten occasions mentioned, on which our Lord was seen after His resurrection: one at the sepulchre by the women; a second by the women returning from the sepulchre; a third by Peter; a fourth by the two going to Emmaus; a fifth in Jerusalem, when Thomas was not present; a sixth when Thomas saw Him; a seventh at the sea of Tiberias; an eighth by all the eleven on a mountain of Galilee, mentioned by Matthew; a ninth when for the last time He sat at meat with the disciples; a tenth when He was seen no longer upon earth, but high up on a cloud.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

21:1–2 The Disciples Go Fishing

The Disciples Are Free to Move About and Work.

Chrysostom: Do you see that he does not remain with them continually, nor is his presence with them the same as before? He appeared, for instance, in the evening, and then disappeared. Then after eight days he appeared once again, and again he disappeared. Then he appeared later again by the sea, and then another time, causing great awe. But what does John mean when he says Jesus “showed” himself? It is clear from this that he was not seen unless he condescended to be seen because his body was from this time forward incorruptible and of unmixed purity. But why has the writer mentioned the place? To show that he had now taken away the greater part of their fear so that they now ventured out from their home and went about everywhere. For they were no longer shut up at home but had gone into Galilee to avoid danger from the Jews. Simon, therefore, comes to fish. For since neither [Christ] was with them continually, nor was the Spirit yet given, nor were they at that time yet entrusted with anything and so had nothing to do, they returned to their trade. Homilies on the Gospel of John 87.2.

The Disciples Continue to Earn a Livelihood.

Augustine: If the disciples had done this when Jesus was lying in the grave and before he rose from the dead ... we might think they did so out of despair. But now after he has risen from the grave, after seeing the marks of his wounds ... after he breathed the Holy Spirit on them ... all at once they become what they were before, fishers, not of people but of fishes. We must remember then that they were not forbidden by their apostleship from earning their livelihood by a lawful use of their skills, provided they had no other means of living.... For if the blessed Paul did not use that power that he had with the rest of the preachers of the gospel, as they did, but went to warfare using his own resources in case the Gentiles, who were aliens from the name of Christ, might be offended at an apparently minor doctrine; if, educated in another way, he learned a craft he never knew before so that, while the teacher worked with his own hands, the hearer might not be burdened—how much more might Peter, who had been a fisherman, work at what he knew if he had nothing else to live on at the time? But how is it that he had nothing, someone will ask, when our Lord promises, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you”? Our Lord, we answer, fulfilled this promise by bringing them the fishes to catch, for

who else brought them? He did not bring on them that poverty that obliged them to go fishing, except in order to exhibit a miracle. Tractate on the Gospel of John 122.2–4.

The Disciples Bound to One Another.

Chrysostom: Having then nothing to do, they went fishing, and they did this at night because they were terribly frightened. Luke also mentions this, but this is not the same occasion. And the other disciples followed because from that time on they were bound to one another, and at the same time desired to see the fishing and use their leisure time well. While they were working and tired, Jesus presents himself before them and does not reveal himself all at once so that they enter into conversation with him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 87.2.

21:3–4 The Disciples Catch Nothing

Few Fish Caught Under the Types and Shadows.

Ammonius: This is the whole import of this passage: Those who had completed their work in the darkness, before the disciples, had not caught anyone in their nets and snatched them from demonic deceit. They may have caught a very few people, which is almost the same thing as nobody. Not even those who served the types and shadows had been caught, since they also despised the divine law and obeyed instead human commandments. Even worse, the multitude of the Gentiles had also not been caught by the nets, since they did not receive the teachings of God. But when “the sun of righteousness” came, that is, the one who hungered after the salvation of the human race, he did not find anything edible among them. He told them to cast forth the word of the gospel, which is the teaching, on the right side of the boat. One can understand that the law and the prophets had been casting forth their words on the left side. By the grace of the one who gave the order, the disciples drew in many. For the marvel on this matter surpasses the fish of the apostles. Fragments on John 636.

21:5 Children, Have You Any Fish?

The Simplicity of Children Ideal for Discipleship.

Clement of Alexandria: Pedagogy is the training of children, as is clear from the word itself. It remains for us to consider the children whom Scripture points to and then to give the Paedagogue charge of them.

We are the children. In many ways Scripture celebrates us and describes us in many different figures of speech, giving variety to the simplicity of the faith by diverse names. Accordingly, in the Gospel, “the Lord, standing on the shore, says to the disciples”—they happened to be fishing—“and called aloud, ‘Children, have you no fish?’ ” In this way he addresses those who were already in the position of disciples as children ... setting before us, for our imitation, the simplicity that is in children. Christ the Educator 1.5.

21:6 There Were Many Fish

The Two Catches of Fish.

Augustine: The Lord appeared to his disciples after his resurrection by the sea of Tiberius and found them fishing, although they had caught nothing. While fishing at night, they caught nothing. Day dawned, and they made a catch because they saw Christ the day, and at a word from the Lord they cast their nets and made a catch. Now we find two catches of fish made by Christ’s disciples at a word from Christ. The first one refers to when he chose them and made them disciples. The second one refers to this current period after he had risen from the dead. Let us compare them, if you agree, and take careful note of the differences between them. It has a lot to do, after all, with the consolidation of our faith.

On the first occasion, then, when the Lord came across the fishermen whom he had not found previously, they had also caught nothing all night, having worked hard without result. He ordered them to throw out the nets. He did not say, on the right, he did not say, on the left, but he simply said, “Throw out the nets.” Before the resurrection, the nets were let out all over the place. After the resurrection, the right side is chosen. Next, in the first catch of fish, the boats are overloaded, the nets are breaking. In this last one after the resurrection, there is no overloading of the boat or breaking of the seine. When they fished the first time, the number of fish caught is not mentioned. This time, after the resurrection, a definite number of fish is mentioned. So let us carry on with the first, in order to arrive at the last.... In the first account we have the nets, the nets of the word, the nets of preaching. Here are the nets. Let the psalm tell us, “I proclaimed, and I spoke. They were multiplied beyond counting.” It is as plain as a pikestaff that it is happening now. The gospel is being proclaimed, Christians are multiplying beyond counting. If they all lived good lives, they would not be overloading the boat. If they were not divided by heretics and schisms, the net would not be breaking....

The last catch of fish refers to the holy church that exists now in the few, toiling away among the many who are evil. This holy church will be realized in that certain, definite number in which no sinner will be found... And they will be big fish because they will all be immortal, all destined to live without end. What can be bigger than what has no end? And the Evangelist made it his business to give your memory a flashback to the first catch of fish. Why else did he add, after all, "And though they were such big fish, the nets were not torn"? It was as though he were saying, "Remember that first catch of fish, when the nets were torn." This will be the kingdom of heaven, no heretics will be barking, no schismatics setting themselves apart. All will be inside, all will be at peace. Sermon 229M.1.

21:7 Peter and John See the Lord

The Different Responses of Peter and John.

Chrysostom: When they recognized him, the disciples Peter and John again exhibited their different temperaments. The one was more fervent, the other more contemplative. The one was ready to go, the other more penetrating. John is the one who first recognized Jesus, but Peter is the first to come to him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 87.2.

The Disciples Knew He Was Both God and Man.

Jerome: After his resurrection, Jesus was standing on the shore; his disciples were in the ship. When the others did not know him, the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." For virginity is the first to recognize a virgin body. Jesus was the same as he was before, yet he was not seen alike by all as the same. And immediately it is added, "And no one dared ask him, 'Who are you?' for they knew that he was the Lord." No one dared because they knew that he was God. They ate with him at dinner because they saw he was a man and had flesh. It was not that he was one person as God, another as man: but, being one and the same Son of God, he was known as man, adored as God. Against John of Jerusalem 35.

Peter Dives for the Pearl of Great Price.

Ephrem the Syrian. Men stripped their clothes off and dived and drew you out, pearl! It was not kings that put you before people, but those naked ones who were a type of the poor and the fishers and the Galileans. For clothed bodies were not able to come to you. They came that were stripped as children. They plunged their bodies and came down to you. And you much desired them, and you helped them who

thus loved you. They gave you good news: their tongues before their hearts did the poor [fishermen] open and produced and showed the new riches among the merchants. On the wrists of people they put you as a medicine of life. The naked ones in a type saw your rising again by the seashore. And by the side of the lake, they, the apostles of a truth, saw the rising again of the Son of your Creator. By you and by your Lord the sea and the lake were beautified. The diver came up from the sea and put on his clothing. And from the lake too Simon Peter came up swimming and put on his coat; clothed as with coats, with the love of both of you, were these two. The Pearl, Hymn 5.3–4.

21:9–10 Jesus Eats Fish

Jesus Eats to Prove the Resurrection.

Jerome: Our Lord ate to prove the resurrection, not to give his palate the pleasure of tasting of honey. He asked for a fish broiled on the coals that he might confirm the doubting apostles who did not dare approach him because they thought they saw not a body but a spirit. Against John of Jerusalem 34.

The Firstfruits of Their Catch.

Cyril of Alexandria: They see a fire of coals, for the Savior had kindled a fire miraculously and put a fish on it that he had caught by his ineffable power. This too he had done by design. For it was not the hand of the holy apostles or the preaching of these spiritual fisherman among the human race that started the work. For he first caught one fish as the firstfruits of those who were to come (not that we mean one precisely, for by one is signified a small number). Then afterward the disciples caught the multitude in their nets, being enabled by his divine bidding to catch what they were fishing for. Commentary on the Gospel of John 12:1.

21:11 Peter Brings the Net to Shore with 153 Fish

The Catch of the Gentiles and the Elect of Israel.

Ammonius: Peter drags the dragnet with the others, bringing the catch to Christ. The hundred can be understood to mean the fullness of the Gentiles. The fifty refers to the elect of Israel who have been saved. And the three set one's mind on the revelation of the holy Trinity, to whose glory the life of the believers who were caught in the dragnet is naturally connected. Fragments on John 637.

The Mystery of the 153 Fish and the Unbroken Nets.

Augustine: When to the number of 10, representing the Law, we add the Holy Spirit as represented by 7, we have 17. And when this number is used for the adding together of every serial number it contains, from 1 up to itself, the sum amounts to 153. For if you add 2 to 1, you have 3 of course. If to these you add 3 and 4, the whole makes 10, etc. ... All therefore who are sharers in such grace are symbolized by this number, that is, are symbolically represented. This number has, besides, three times over, the number of 50, and 3 in addition, with reference to the mystery of the Trinity; while, again, the number of 50 is made up by multiplying 7 by 7, with the addition of 1, for 7 times 7 make 49. And the 1 is added to show that there is one who is expressed by 7 on account of his sevenfold operation. And we know that it was on the fiftieth day after our Lord's ascension that the Holy Spirit was sent, for whom the disciples were commanded to wait according to the promise. It was not, then, without a purpose that these fishes were described as so many in number, and so large in size, that is, as both 153 and large. Tractates on the Gospel of John 122.8–9.

The Mystery of the Church at the End.

Augustine: The miracle of the catch of fish is a great mystery in the great Gospel of John. And it is recorded in the last chapter to commend it all the more forcefully to our attention. There were seven disciples taking part in that fishing expedition: Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee and two others whose names are not given. This number refers to the end of time because time is counted by periods of seven days. The statement "When morning arrived, Jesus stood on the shore" also pertains to the end because the shore is the end of the sea and therefore signifies the end of the world. Tractates on the Gospel of John 122.6.

A Type of the Church.

Augustine: The Lord indicated here the kind of character the church would have in the end of the world, just as by that other draught of fishes he indicated its present character. The one our Lord did at the beginning of his ministry, the other after his resurrection. The former draught of fishes signified the mixture of bad and good that composes the church at present. The latter signified the good alone that it will contain in eternity when the world is ended and the resurrection of the dead completed. Furthermore, on that previous occasion Jesus did not stand on the shore but went into a ship which was Simon's and asked him to put out a little from the land.... In the former account they put the fishes that were caught

into the ship and did not, as here, draw the net to the shore.... The one account took place before the resurrection, the other after the resurrection of the Lord because in the earlier account it signified our being called by the Lord. The account here signifies our being raised from the dead.

In the earlier account the nets are not thrown to the right or to the left so that we might think he was indicating either the good if it was to the right, or the bad if it was to the left. Instead, he has them throw the nets indifferently: "Let down your nets for a draught" is all that he says, meaning that the good and bad were mixed together. But here in this later account he says, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship," to signify those who should stand on the right hand, the good.... But those who belong to the resurrection of life, that is, to the right hand, and are caught within the net of the Christian name, shall only appear on the shore, that is, at the end of the world, after the resurrection. This is why they were not able to draw the net into the ship and unload the fishes, as they were before.... The church keeps these of the right hand, after death, in the sleep of peace, as it were, in the deep till the net comes to shore. Tractates on the Gospel of John 122.7.

21:12 Come and Eat

Resurrected Bodies Eat Out of Desire, Not Necessity.

Augustine: The bodies of the righteous at the resurrection will need neither any fruit to preserve them from dying of disease or the wasting decay of old age nor any bodily nourishment to prevent hunger and thirst. For they will be endowed with such a sure and inviolable gift of immortality that they will not eat because they have to, but only if they want to. Not the power but the necessity of eating and drinking shall be taken away from them ... just like our Savior after his resurrection took meat and drink with his disciples, with spiritual but still real flesh, not for the sake of nourishment, but in an exercise of his power. City of God 13.22.

They Were in Awe.

Chrysostom: "They knew that it was the Lord," and therefore they did not ask him, "Who are you?" But seeing that his form was altered and full of awe, they were greatly amazed and wanted to ask something about it. But fear, and their knowledge that he was not someone else but the same person, checked the inquiry, and they only ate what he created for them by exercising greater power than before. For here he no longer looks to heaven, nor does he perform those human acts he did before, thereby showing that

those things that he did previously were done by way of condescension. Homilies on the Gospel of John 87.2.

21:13–14 Jesus Feeds the Seven Disciples

Bread Alludes to the Sacrament.

Augustine: Mystically, the broiled fish is Christ who suffered. And he is the bread that came down from heaven. The church is united to his body in order to participate in everlasting blessedness. This is why he says, “Bring of the fish that you have now caught,” in order to signify that all of us who have this hope and are in that number seven of disciples, which represents the universal church here, partake of this great sacrament and are admitted to this bliss. Tractate on the Gospel of John 123.2.

Jesus’ Post resurrection Appearances.

Augustine: We find in the four Evangelists ten distinct appearances of the Lord to different persons after his resurrection: First was to the women near the sepulcher; the second to the women returning from the sepulcher; the third, to Peter; the fourth, to the two going to Emmaus; the fifth, to the large number in Jerusalem when Thomas was not present; the sixth when Thomas saw him; the seventh at the sea of Tiberias; the eighth by all the Eleven on a mountain of Galilee mentioned by Matthew; a ninth when for the last time he sat eating with the disciples; a tenth when he was seen no longer on earth but lifted up in the cloud as he ascended into heaven. Harmony of the Gospels 3.25.83.

Reference to Days When He Appeared.

Augustine: [The “third time”] is a reference not to appearances but to days. In other words, the first day includes all of his manifestations of himself on the day of his resurrection, then the second day occurs eight days after that when Thomas saw and believed, and now the third day occurs with the draught of fishes. And afterward as often as he saw them up to the time of his ascension. Tractate on the Gospel of John 123.3.

Looking Forward to Our Resurrection.

Chrysostom: Perhaps when you heard these things, you glowed and called those happy who were then with him along with those who shall be with him at the day of the general resurrection. Let us then make

every effort so that we may see that admirable face. For if when now we hear, we are so enflamed, and desire to have been in those days that he spent upon earth, and to have heard his voice and seen his face and to have approached and touched and ministered unto him—consider how great a thing it will be to see him no longer in a mortal body or doing human actions but with a bodyguard of angels, being ourselves also in a form of unmixed purity, and beholding him and enjoying the rest of that bliss which surpasses all language. Therefore I beseech you, let us use every means so as not to miss such glory. For nothing is difficult if we are willing, nothing burdensome if we apply ourselves. “If we endure, we shall also reign with him.” Homilies on the Gospel of John 87.3.