

Scripture Study

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C



Opening prayer

Isaiah 6:1-8

(Psalm 138:1-5, 7-8)

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

Overview of the Gospel:

- Between last Sunday's Gospel (Luke 4:21-30)—when Jesus caused an uproar in the synagogue at Nazareth—and this Sunday's reading, Jesus has been throughout Galilee and Judea (respectively, northern and southern Israel) teaching, casting out evil spirits, and healing the sick, including the mother-in-law of Simon (who would be called Peter).
- This Sunday's Gospel finds Jesus teaching on the shore of the Lake of Gennesaret, sometimes called the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18) and the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1). To accommodate the large crowds coming to hear him, he gets into a fishing boat (the one belonging to Peter) and teaches from there. This action was seen by the early Church Fathers as a symbol of how Christ teaches through the Church, which is often called the "Barque (or boat) of St. Peter."
- After finishing his teaching, Jesus directs Peter to lower his nets for a catch. Peter, an experienced fisherman, knows very well that it was not the time of day to catch fish. Out of obedience to Jesus, however he complies—with miraculous results.

Questions:

- How did this miracle affect Peter? Why does it seem to have a more profound effect on him than the healing of his mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39)? What is he beginning to grasp about Jesus? About sin? About belief in himself?
- What do you think Simon Peter was thinking and feeling in verse 5? 7? 8? When was the first time, if ever, that you responded to Jesus like Peter did in verse 8?
- Compare and contrast the scene from the Gospel reading with that found in the First Reading (Isaiah 6:1-8). How are the scenes similar? Different?
- Peter asks Jesus to depart from him, "For I am a sinful man." In reply, Jesus tells him not to be afraid. How often do feelings of unworthiness make you afraid to approach God? What do you do with that fear?
- In your "fishing business," how do you see Jesus: (a) Interesting, but a slightly irrelevant teacher? (b) Potentially a great business partner—if you could hire him to work for you? (c) The one who calls all the shots?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 208, 552, 765, 787, 849-852

Closing prayer

"Put out into deep water!" *Throw aside the pessimism that makes a coward of you.* "And let down your nets for a catch." *Don't you see that you, like Peter, can say: "Jesus, if you say so, I will search for souls"?* -St. Josemaria Escriva

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!

"Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men"

Scripture: *Luke 5:1-11*

While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennes'aret. And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Meditation: Why did Jesus perform the miracle of the great catch of fish? No doubt the great crowd of people who had pressed upon Jesus had something to do



with this miracle. They were very hungry for God and were eager to hear his word. Jesus wanted to use this occasion to teach his disciples an important lesson. Although Simon was wearied from a night of fruitless toil, he nonetheless pressed upon Jesus for his word of command: *At your word I will let down the nets*. When you meet disappointment and failure, do you press upon the Lord, like Simon, to hear his word and to receive his command?

This incident tells us an important truth about how God works in and through us for his glory. God expects of us greater things than we can do by ourselves. When we cooperate in *his* works, we accomplish far beyond what we can do on our own. Therese of Lisieux, a Carmelite nun who died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-four, wrote to a friend: "Jesus has so incomprehensible a love for us that he wills that we have a share with him in the salvation of souls. He wills to do nothing without us. The Creator of the universe awaits the prayer of a poor little soul to save other souls redeemed like it at the price of all his Blood." When God's word is

spoken his kingdom is revealed and his power is released. When people respond to God's word with faith and obedience they are changed and made "a new creation" in Christ (2 Corinthians. 5:17). God chooses ordinary people, like you and me, as his ambassadors and he uses the ordinary circumstances of our daily lives and work situations to draw others into his kingdom.

Jesus speaks the same message to us today: we will "catch people" for the kingdom of God if we allow the light of Jesus Christ to shine through us. God wants others to see the light of Christ in us in the way we live, speak, and witness the joy of the gospel. Paul the Apostles says, "But thanks be to God, who in Christ Jesus always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing" (2 Corinthians 2:15). Do you witness to those around you the joy of the gospel and do you pray for your neighbors, co-workers, and relatives that they may come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and grow in the knowledge of his love?

"Lord Jesus, fill my heart with love and compassion for those who do not know you or follow you. May I be a good witness of your truth and salvation to my family, friends, and co-workers."

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