

## Homily for 5th Sunday, February 6, 2022

Six years ago, a scripture scholar wrote the following about Simon Peter's possible inner thoughts when Jesus proposed to put out into deep water and lower the nets.

**“Peter is reluctant to obey Jesus’ command. Who is this rabbi from Nazareth who thinks he knows about fishing? First of all, the prime time for fishing was at night, and Simon and his co-workers had already labored all night and there were no fish to be had. If there were no fish at night, there certainly won’t be any in broad daylight, in the afternoon. Secondly, the better places for fishing were close to the shore, where there were plenty of plants for the fish to feed on, not out in the relatively empty deep water. The rabbi from Nazareth wants them to go on a fool’s mission, getting their just-cleaned nets dirty again in a vain effort. Nonetheless, Simon defers to Jesus’ wishes. Is it the force of Jesus’ personality? A “sixth sense” that this is no ordinary rabbi? Deference for the public prestige that Jesus has gained? An unwillingness to publicly oppose a clergyman renowned for his healings and teachings?”**

Whatever the reasons, following Jesus’ instructions led to an unimaginable richness of blessings. As another scholar suggested, the nets at the point of breaking and the boats at the point of sinking “tell us that sometimes the blessing of [success in ministry] can actually become a burden.”

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And Peter’s reaction was a deep sense of his unworthiness. He understood himself to be in the presence of holiness, and he was a sinner. Basically – this is the witness we are given in all our readings today. Isaiah, Paul, and now Simon Peter.

Everyone called to serve God, serve God’s people, and bring other to God knows this call is beyond them – their character and their abilities.

Deacon Kerry Blandford, the Parish Life Coordinator at Saint Andrew Parish, is also on the Deacon Formation Team the Archdiocese. He relates that many of those seeking to be deacons say that they are not worthy. Deacon Kerry’s reply is, “Of course not. None of us are.”

**God is so much more than we are. God is so much better than we are. And what God wants of us is much more than we can do alone. But that is the point. God is the one who enables great things to happen when we give even our skills and our lives over to His will. When we say yes to His call.**

**I would not be doing my duty if I did not take this opportunity to remind everyone here to pray for vocations. And I also remind particularly all of you single young adults and youth to prayerful be open to God's call and the Church's call to serve His people. Men and women in the Consecrated life (also called Religious Orders), and men as Deacons and Priests. And also to serve in the Missions as lay, religious, and clergy.**

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**But as is so often the case in these encounters with Christ, it is not just about Apostleship for Simon Peter. Today's reading speaks to all of us in Christ's call for us as Disciples.**

**God calls everyone. God has called each of us; into existence, to life, and to love – which come from Him.**

**God called each of us to Salvation in Christ Jesus. Jesus calls us as He called Simon Peter. Here in Luke's gospel we are given details we miss in Matthew and Mark. Jesus has already been encountering Peter. First in his home when Our Lord healed his mother-in-law and then healed, expelled demons, and preached in synagogues. Now on this shore and in this boat while Peter is working, Peter hears Christ's teaching the crowds, and follows His commands. Finally, at least for now, he receives Christ's specific call to be not afraid and bring in others.**

**We all encounter Our Lord in ways in which he invites us into an ever-deepening communion with Him, His people, and announcing Him to the world. Christ calls us to follow him, as He did Peter, even in our work. Jesus calls us to be disciples of Him in every part of our lives; in our homes, in our free time, in our choices of companions, and in our work, as well as in our worship. Peter's call to deep discipleship is our call as well.**

**As for the fear of inadequacy...we can remember the old saying, "Jesus does not call the equipped, He equips the called." These words are not meant to let us take it easy. But they are meant to help us be not afraid to follow Him and invite the world to come and find salvation in Him.**

**As that scripture scholar I quoted earlier put it:**

**“The message of this Gospel for us today can be summed up in the Latin phrase so beloved by John Paul II [the Second]: “Duc in Altum!”, “Put out into the deep!” This is Jesus command to Peter and it remains his will for the whole Church. Yes, we are facing a hostile culture. Yes, there are “bad fish” out there. Yes, we have been laboring for years “in the night” and don’t seem to have gotten anywhere. None of that can prevent the Lord from delivering an abundant catch. But if we fail to rise to his challenge, and disobey the command to sail out to deep water, it won’t happen. Pope Francis is emphatically calling on Catholics to take risks in order to go into the “deep water” and spread the Gospel. Let’s heed his call and go fishing. “**