

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

GOSPEL

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Jesus was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats—it was Simon's—and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.' 'Master,' Simon replied, 'we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point.

When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.' For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch.' Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him.

(Luke 5:1-11)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The Lake of Gennesaret is simply another name for the Sea of Galilee. It is also sometimes known as the Sea of Tiberias.
- This episode probably took place on the north-west corner of the lake near the village of Capernaum, where Simon Peter lived.
- The huge haul of fish is symbolic of the overabundance of good that is promised to those who believe in and follow Jesus. It is also a symbol of the abundance of the messianic banquet that Jesus brings.

EXPLORING THE WORD

This text tells Luke's story of the call of Simon to become a disciple of Jesus. Jesus already knew Simon; he had cured his mother-in-law after 'they interceded with him about her' (Luke 4:38). Jesus had already spent time in Capernaum, Simon's hometown, and had performed miracles and cures. The large crowd who had witnessed these things now pressed on Jesus and he made use of the 'pulpit' of the boat. When asked to 'put into the deep', Simon, despite his misgivings, complies. The sheer wonder of the unprecedented catch of fish hints that somehow the action of God is to be traced in this extraordinary event. Simon—now with his Christian name, Peter, added to his Hebrew name—confesses his unworthiness and addresses Jesus as 'Lord'. It is only then, in the face of Peter's faith, that Jesus reveals the vocation and the mission of the disciple, and Peter, along with James and John, immediately accepts that mission wholeheartedly. They leave everything and follow him.

- Spend some time imagining what 'putting out into the deep' may have meant for Peter and his companions.
- What does it mean for Christians today to confess Jesus as 'Lord'?
- What does it mean to you to 'leave everything and follow him'?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- Are there ways in which you are already sharing in the task of being a 'fisher' of others?
- In what ways are you being asked to 'put out into deep water'? What does this mean?
- Is this prospect a fear-filled one?
- Spend time each day reflecting on being 'caught up' in the net of Christ and what that means for you.
- Have there been occasions in your life when, like Peter and his companions, you were 'completely overcome'? What was the source of this feeling? What happened? Share your stories with others.
- Repeat these words of the prophet Isaiah from this Sunday's first reading:

*'Whom shall I send? Who will be my messenger?
'Here I am, Lord. Send me!'*

