

## 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.
- The events of this text probably occurred on the north-west corner of the lake near the village of Capernaum, where Simon Peter lived.
- The huge haul of fish symbolises the overabundance of good that is promised to those who believe in and follow Jesus. It also symbolises the abundance of the messianic banquet that Jesus brings.

### EXPLORING THE WORD

In this text, Luke recounts how Simon was called 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). Furthermore, Jesus had also spent time in Capernaum, Simon's hometown, and had performed miracles and cures there. The large crowd who had witnessed these events now pressed on Jesus, and he made use of the 'pulpit' of the boat. When Simon is asked to 'put out into the deep water', he complies despite his misgivings. The unprecedented catch of fish and sheer wonder in response hint that the action of God is somehow 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 mission of the disciple. Peter, along with James and John, immediately and wholeheartedly accept that mission. They leave everything and follow Jesus.

- Imagine what 'putting out into deep water' may have meant for Peter and his companions.
- What does it mean for present-day Christians to confess Jesus as 'Lord'?
- What does 'leave everything and follow him' mean to you?

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- Are there ways in which you are already participating in the task of being a 'fisher' of others?
- How are you being asked to 'put out into deep water'? What does this mean to you?
- Is this prospect a fear-filled one?
- Spend time each day reflecting on the idea of 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 felt '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!'*

