

Thursday's Gospel: "They left everything and followed him"

Gospel for Thursday in the 22nd Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 5:1-11*)

While the people pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. 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 Zebedee, 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.

Commentary

Today's Gospel passage shows us how Jesus wants to rely on us to bring his good news to the whole world. To do so, we need to recognize both our own fragile condition and Jesus' true identity.

Absorbed in his work as a fisherman, Peter sees Jesus approaching his boat, to make use of it to give the nourishment of his word to the hungry. Jesus looks for a way to help the people hear him as well as possible. At the same time, he confirms his words with a miracle. Peter has not managed to catch anything despite his efforts all night, but Jesus gives him an indication that

he humbly accepts. The extraordinary catch of fish makes him realize his own littleness and who it is that is in his boat. And he feels afraid: both for knowing his own nothingness and for being so close to God.

When God looks at us, what he sees is what we can become. His loving look is always both an encouragement and a call, an invitation to welcome him and let him live in us (cf. *Gal* 2:20). In the boat, Jesus makes Peter see the deep meaning of his life: to assist him in the expansion of his Kingdom. Many people walk through life oblivious to God and what he wants to offer us. With Peter, we are invited to cast our nets, wherever we are, and God will provide the fruit: “Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men”; you will be effective and attract souls to God. We should therefore trust our Lord’s words: get

into the boat, take the oars, hoist the sails and launch out into this sea of the world which Christ gives us as an inheritance” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 159).

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