

CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation



February 7, 2010 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C)

Gospel reading: Luke 5:1-11 [To be read aloud]

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God*, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

**It is in this territory around the Lake of Galilee, called Gennesaret in this text, that Jesus' preaching is called "the word of God" for the first time.*

Brief commentary:

Luke uses the example of Simon's acceptance of Jesus to counter the earlier rejection of him by his hometown people. The introduction of the term "word of God" at the beginning of the scene points to the calling of the fishermen and their response as the result of the effective proclamation of the word of God. Simon is called to obey in faith when reason did not support the action. But Simon trusted Jesus and lowered the nets even if it did not make any sense to do so. He acknowledges his unworthiness, but Jesus shows that he came to associate sinful people with his ministry, if they will put their trust in him. In this episode Simon is called Peter for the first time, "the Rock," the name he will later have as the leader of the church. From earliest times the church called herself the "bark of Peter," the place in which faith in Jesus is tested. In the Gospel of Matthew the fishermen who follow Jesus leave their nets and their father; in Luke, they leave everything, an indication of Luke's theme of complete detachment from material possessions.

Today's reading offers three significant messages:

- Jesus calls us as we are in the midst of our daily routine. We do not need to go anywhere to find the God who is always calling us.
- Peter, and later Paul, recognized their sinfulness and unworthiness and yet believed that they were being called by the grace of God to build a new community.
- Through Baptism, every Christian is called to put Jesus and his mission at the center of their lives.

For our shared or personal reflection:

After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.

1. Am I open to accepting God's call, or do I prefer to wait until I think "I am worthy of it?"
2. Do I trust God enough to venture forth and go into deep waters, or am I always asking to be taken to a safe harbor? Explain.

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 160; 208; 545-546; 551-555.