

GOSPEL

LUKE 5:1-11

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Although Simon had worked hard, he had caught nothing. Jesus, now in the boat with him, asked him to try again. Do you see Jesus as being in the boat with you as you work? How could you involve Jesus more in your day to day work life?
2. After this encounter with Jesus, Simon, James and John left everything and followed him. Are there things in your life which you've had to leave behind in order to follow Jesus?

A REFLECTION BY POPE FRANCIS

This Sunday's Gospel tells us — in St Luke's narrative — of the call of Jesus' first disciples. The event takes place in the context of everyday life: there are several fishermen on the shore of the lake of Galilee, who, after working all night and catching nothing, are washing and arranging their nets. Jesus gets into one of the boats, that of Simon, called Peter, whom he asks to put out a little from the shore, and he starts to preach the Word of God to the crowd of people who had gathered. When he is finished speaking, he tells them to put out into the deep and cast the nets. Simon had previously met Jesus and felt the prodigious power of his word. Therefore, he responds: "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets". And this faith of his did not disappoint: indeed, the nets filled with so many fish that they nearly broke. Facing this extraordinary event, the fishermen are greatly astonished. Simon Peter throws himself at Jesus' feet, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord". That prodigious sign convinces him that Jesus is not only a formidable master whose word is true and powerful, but he is the Lord, he is the manifestation of God. For Peter this close presence brings about a strong sense of his own pettiness and unworthiness. From a human point of view, he thinks that there should be distance between the sinner and the Holy One. In truth, his very condition as a sinner requires that the Lord not distance Himself from him, in the same way that a doctor cannot distance himself from those who are sick.

Jesus' response to Simon Peter is reassuring and decisive: "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men". Once again the fisherman of Galilee, placing his trust in this word, leaves everything and follows the one who has become his Lord and Master. Simon's workmates, James and John, do the same. This is the logic that guides Jesus' mission and the mission of the Church: go in search, "fish" for men and women, not to proselytize, but to restore full dignity and freedom to

all, through the forgiveness of sins. This is the essential point of Christianity: to spread the free and regenerative love of God, with a welcoming and merciful attitude toward everyone, so that each person can encounter God's tenderness and have the fullness of life.

Today's Gospel challenges us: do we know how to truly trust in the Word of the Lord? Or do we let ourselves become discouraged by our failures? As a sign of mercy we are called to comfort those who feel they are sinners, unworthy before the Lord, defeated by their mistakes, by speaking to them the very words of Jesus: "Do not be afraid. The Father's mercy is greater than your sins! It is greater, do not be afraid!". May the Virgin Mary help us to ever better understand that being disciples means placing our feet in the footsteps left by the Master: they are the footprints of divine grace that restore life for all.

REFLECTION QUESTION

- What has struck you from this reflection by the Holy Father?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Move to prayers of thanks and praise to God
4. Prayer for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps reciting the 'Glory Be' or similar prayer.