

*Put out into
the deep water and
let down your nets
for a catch*

Luke 5:4



Monthly Reflection:

June 2020

Let us imagine this scene in which these powerful words of Jesus were spoken. A disheartened Simon Peter stands in his boat, weary, tired and ready to call it quits after a night without a catch. Despite his reservations, he allows Jesus into his boat and begins to listen to his words. Mesmerized by the gentleness and love captured in those words, he could not ignore his heart burning with love inside of him. Setting aside his discouragement, an obedience to Jesus' invitation to "put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch," leads him to cast his fishing net into a sea that had only provided disappointment.

This ordinary net and this seemingly useless action leads to an extraordinary miracle. Using the very tool that Simon had used his entire life, his fishing net, Jesus commanded him, with love, to put out into the deep. In doing so, his life was radically transformed. At first, Simon Peter's joy was in this incredible, unexplainable catch of fish. However, we see that the disposition of his heart quickly changes to one of repentance and contrition in the face of his unbelief and unworthiness. Simon Peter recognizes that he has nothing to offer this holy man of God. Jesus quickly responds to his poverty by inviting him to an even greater joy than that of the miraculous catch of fish. Jesus invites Peter into the joy of responding to his call and election – to be a fisher of men.

We are each given this great call to be fishers of men. We are each given the chance to experience the joy of following the Lord's voice. Everyday, Jesus comes into our boats, our lives, our professions and our vocations. He asks us to cast our nets, the nets of our hobbies, our interests and talents, for the sake and salvation of souls. With his help and by following his commands, these ordinary aspects of our lives become extraordinary instruments of love leading to miracles of salvation.

What prevents us from responding to this invitation to put out into the deep? Do we trust the voice of the Lord? Do we wonder if we are worthy, qualified or equipped? In the midst of such doubts, let us also wonder at the journey of St. Peter, a poor fisherman who, in the eyes of the world, was neither worthy nor equipped, but tried his best to follow the Lord in obedience and love. He fails and even denies Jesus in his hour of need but with Christ's forgiveness and the power of the Holy Spirit eventually fulfills his call and commission by becoming a martyr and the rock upon which the Church has been built.

If we look around our community, we are sure to see many St. Peters amongst us. Perhaps they are the very same people that have caught us and brought us to the Lord. Many times, when we meet these people, we are amazed by their faith. They can seem so extraordinary. But rarely are we aware of their journey. There would have been many times when they recognized their sinfulness, unfaithfulness and unworthiness but responded in faith and humility to the invitation of the Lord to enter more deeply into their call to serve the kingdom of God. They, like St. Peter, began their journey when they allowed Jesus into their life and poverty. Over time, as they grew in obedience and love, the joy of following Christ in the ordinariness of their lives has allowed them to be extraordinarily fruitful.

In this time after Pentecost, as we recall the courage and boldness of the Apostles and the early Church, let us pray for a renewal of joy and missionary zeal in the midst of our ordinary vocations. Let us reflect on our commission to be fishers of men. And let us allow our hearts, burning with love, to respond to Jesus' invitation: My dear Jesus Youth, put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.

"Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls. A joyful heart is the inevitable result of a heart burning with love".

- Mother Teresa

