

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (6/28/20)

Jesus calls Peter into his service today by a strange method. First, he simply insists his assistance. Peter becomes a somewhat passive participant in Jesus' mission of preaching by serving as the driver of a mobile preaching platform. There was an initial willingness to be of service. Did he care much for the message - did he even know what Jesus was about to say - who knows. However, perhaps he sensed the crowd's enthusiasm and wanted to see what this was all about. It would not be the first (or last) time Jesus would be drawn to by curiosity (think about Zachaeus). Peter allows the preaching from his boat, and thereby has a front row seat to hear the Master speak.

How jealous we should be of that time, how privileged a position - maybe a harkening to the privileged position of Peter in the later Church and a sign of his closeness to the words of the Messiah. At the end of the preaching he turns to the passive Peter and he gives him a charge - *Launch out into the deep*. Peter initially protests, but it is a weak protest. You would expect it to be stronger. The itinerant preacher telling the seasoned fisherman how to do his job! Maybe something Peter heard in that preaching touched him and softened his heart. Peter willingly complies with Jesus and catches more fish than all his efforts before had yielded. Jesus directs all of us in our own way towards the catch he sees us to make. We are often content at staying in the shallow water, content to play it safe - but Jesus asks more. He asks us to go into the depths. To go to the place that he points, though it may seem risky; to follow where he points, though it may seem fruitless; to go into the depths so that we may bring forth from the depths a catch for Him.

We may feel unsure of why he asks for a thing or if it's really good, as Peter was. We may feel ourselves unworthy, as Peter did (*Leave me Lord, I am a sinful man*). Or we can join into the tasks and the vocation the Lord calls us to and, as Peter did, just follow. We may also do as Peter did and bring in our close associates into the same enterprise. We might worry for the costs involved, we may worry for the inconvenience, we may fear the social consequences. But as St. Paul tells the Romans in the Epistle: *I reckon the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come*. All of us can pull back when the road seems difficult, all of us are given to despair, all - at times - wish to escape the discomfort and fear of following the

way of the Lord, and His specific tasks for us. But if we were not worthy of the task we would not be asked, if we were not capable of it He would not call us to it, if He would not supply the needs for the journey he would not send us on it. What are we each called fourth to do as Catholic Christians in the world? What does he wish us to do? When do we transform from the passive tender of a mobile preaching platform to one who goes into the depths to fish for others? This is something that requires prayer and guidance to figure out.

That union with the Lord that was begun at our Baptism, and is made a reality of greater depth each time we celebrate the Eucharist and receive the precious Body and Blood of the Savior - that union will sustain us amid the fears and worries. On the other hand, it is when we go into the depths on our own - in search of our own catch - that we will come up empty (as Peter did before Jesus pointed the way). Our Lord is the one who calls us to the depths, the one for whom we should be working as we go to make our catch, and the one who will come and rescue us as he did for the disciple when he calmed the storm that threatened them. The questions that remains are: Where do we go next? Where is he calling us now? What is the challenge he presents to us to engage for his service? and Do we have the faith that he would not guide us to the depths if there was not a catch to be had?