



## Living Our Faith

Peter, James, and John—experienced fishermen all—needed no one to tell them where to lower their nets. But “that night they caught nothing.” Defeated and dispirited as dawn was breaking, they hardly expected anyone to be watching them from the shore at that hour; but Someone was. “Cast the net over the right side,” Jesus called out, “and you will find something.” Indeed they did—more fish than they could pull in.

The shoreline observer who called forth their uncomprehending obedience had turned utter failure into unimaginable success. And *their* hands had brought it about. The memory stayed with them. “We must obey God rather than men,” they would later respond when ordered by the Jewish leaders “to stop teaching in that name.” They knew that the catch they had made that morning was pure gift of God, so they had to give away to others what washed into their net in such overflowing abundance. From the Apostles we learn how to *live* the faith we receive from them.

You and I, however, didn’t begin our journey of faith on the lake, but on land.

Like the Child Jesus walking down the street hand in hand with Mary and Joseph in the poster for this year’s Bishop’s Appeal, we needed the support, the good example, and the guidance of “those who love us in the faith,” as St. Paul calls them (Titus 3:15). Like Mary and Joseph leading Jesus, those who brought us up to be Catholic embodied the desire of the psalmist: “Let the coming generation be told of the Lord” (Ps. 22:31).

You and I can help tell of Him too by supporting the Bishop's Annual Appeal. Funds that flow into the Appeal from all over Eastern Oregon make it possible for us as a diocese to cast the Gospel net farther and wider than our individual parishes can do on their own.

To take a prime example, this coming June Deacon Steve Garza will be ordained priest in Bend. Contributions to the Bishop’s Appeal from every parish in the Diocese have supported this former Hermiston parishioner's years of studies at St. John XXIII Seminary near Boston. As *Father* Steve he will spend the rest of his days in the parishes that sustained his vocation fishing for men. And the other seminarians God has sent us depend on the Bishop's Appeal to follow their path to the priesthood as well.

Meanwhile, volunteer parish catechists and youth leaders are already hard at

work on the sea. Week in and week out they cast their nets into storm-tossed waters to “catch” the minds and hearts of young people. As Mary and Joseph help the Child Jesus put one foot after another in the logo for this year’s Appeal, so do these indispensable parish servants show our children and grandchildren how to keep their balance as Christians and walk toward the Light that brightens our darkness. To amplify their efforts they turn to the diocesan Catechetical Symposium, diocesan summer camps, and the Idaho Catholic Youth Conference—all of which are funded in whole or in part by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal.

That night on the sea it was all hands on deck for the weary Apostles—and not a one of them idle, for the great catch of fish depended on everyone lending his strength to the effort. The fish were too many and their weight was too heavy to get them into the boat, so the Apostles simply dragged the packed-full net ashore. There, once again with Jesus, they shared the joy of living their faith together.

Think of the Apostles out there on the water as you consider a donation to *Living Our Faith*, the Annual Bishop's Appeal for 2019. Think of Mary and Joseph guiding the halting steps of the Infant Jesus. Faith comes alive when we work together to spread it.