

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent- C 2010

[Acts 5:27-32, 40-41; Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13; Revelation 5:11-14; John 21:1-14](#)  
*Homilies are vehicles for breaking open the Word of God. First read the Sunday readings at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/041810.shtml>*

So, what went wrong here?

Now there are a lot of things that went right in today's Gospel. First off, this is a post-Resurrection appearance. Jesus is risen—alleluia! There is a miraculous catch of fish, so many that they should have torn apart the net. Jesus offers bread and fish to the disciples, an echo of the 5 barley loaves and 2 fish that had fed the 5000. It was Jesus who “took the bread and gave it to them” just as he does at this Eucharistic table today.

But something had gone awry. These were professional fishermen who spent a whole night shift coming up empty. I can tell you that when I worked at Warren Alloys Foundry, if we all had worked a whole shift and had no castings to show for it, some heads would have rolled.

So what went wrong? I'll give you a clue. Who had once walked out onto the wind-tossed sea only to lose faith and start to sink? (Mt 14:29) Who wanted to build three tents and stay on the mountain after witnessing the transfiguration? (Mk 9:5) Who had said to Jesus, “You will never wash my feet?” (Jn 13:8) And who cursed and swore that he did not know Jesus the night before his crucifixion? (Mt 26:74)

You have to love the man for his consistency in **not** getting it--our very own Peter.

So what did Peter do that really messed things up in today's Gospel?

He said, “**I** am going fishing.” We are so much like Peter that we didn't even catch that on the first time around. Biblical scholars agree that this fishing story is about bringing people into the Kingdom. Remember Jesus had recruited them to be “fishers of men”? (Mk 1:17) It was in Peter's asserting that **he** was doing the fishing that things went bad.

I first experienced that as a rookie at the police department. Everyone knows that cops hate responding to domestic assaults. They are dangerous, no win situations.

However, even though as a civil servant it was not appropriate to talk about God in my contacts, I still tried to bring Jesus' peace to every domestic call. It was kind of eerie, because it seemed like most of them responded well. I started to get a reputation as the guy to be sent to domestics. I was feeling pretty puffed up by it all. And then, you can guess it, **my** handling of domestics started to get a little fractured. Folks weren't responding as positively and some of them got pretty rough. It wasn't to **me** that those earlier people had responded well, it was to Jesus' care and compassion. I was an instrument to get him there, but **I** was not the one.

Do you think the same thing happens in church ministry? Does that happen in your life?

If I am successful in my career or in my relationships, do I tell myself it is because I work hard, I am intelligent, I am witty, I am...whatever? Well, our delegations to our sister parish in El Salvador report back that there are hard working, intelligent and witty kids combing through the junk yard every day. It is by the grace of God that the junk heap is not the place that I am expressing my diligence, intelligence and wit.

But just as Jesus never gave up on Peter, he never gives up on us. Jesus calls to us to let him enter into our lives so that he can serve those around us. Jesus needs us to get Him there. Jesus needs us to allow him to touch those in need, to love those who need his love.

When **I** go out fishing, I'm likely to come back empty handed. When it is **we** who go out, I mean you, me and Jesus... well be prepared to catch an abundance of life that will strain the net to bursting.