

Alleluia, alleluia!

Come follow me, says the Lord,
and I will make you fishers of my people.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 5:1-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

They left everything and followed him.

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 boats 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.**

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Reflections on the Gospel



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CATCHING PEOPLE ‘ALIVE’

Luke’s Gospel leaves the call of the first disciples until Jesus’ own ministry has got under way. His ministry then provides a model for them to follow.

So Simon Peter’s call comes in the context of Jesus’ preaching to a crowd eager to hear the Word. Peter, the fisherman, helps Jesus by allowing him to make use of his boat to avoid being pushed by the crowd into the sea.

Jesus, however, has further plans for Peter. He doesn’t call him immediately to a new way of life but challenges him precisely in his area of expertise: catching fish. Peter resists, but eventually goes along with the command to put out to sea and try for a catch. The unbelievable harvest that results, where all night there had been no catch at all, is a clear sign that he is in the presence of the power and limitless generosity of God. Hence his dramatic response: falling at Jesus’ feet, owning his own sinfulness and unworthiness.

It is precisely at this moment of conversion and self-knowledge that Jesus judges Peter ready to receive the call: ‘Do not be afraid; from now on it is people you will catch’. Normally, when fish are caught, they die—preparatory to being eaten! To avoid this implication, Luke uses a rare Greek word for ‘catch’ here, one that has the sense of catching and *keeping alive*—as when one nets fish for an aquarium.

Peter is now to ‘catch’ people with the Word that will make them truly ‘alive’.

Brendan Byrne, SJ

FIRST READING

Isa 6:1-8

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Here am I! Send me.

In the year of King Uzziah’s death I saw the Lord seated on a high throne; his train filled the sanctuary; above him stood seraphs, each one with six wings.

And they cried out one to another in this way,
‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.
His glory fills the whole earth.’

The foundations of the threshold shook with the voice of the one who cried out, and the Temple was filled with smoke. I said:

‘What a wretched state I am in! I am lost,
for I am a man of unclean lips
and I live among a people of unclean lips,
and my eyes have looked at the King, the
Lord of hosts.’

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding in his hand a live coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. With this he touched my mouth and said:

‘See now, this has touched your lips,
your sin is taken away,
your iniquity is purged.’

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:

‘Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?’

I answered, ‘Here I am, send me.’

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 137:1-5, 7-8. R. v. 1

R. In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.

1. I thank you, Lord, with all my heart, / you have heard the words of my mouth. / Before the angels I will bless you. / I will adore before your holy temple. **R.**

2. I thank you for your faithfulness and love / which excel all we ever knew of you. / On the day I called, you answered; / you increased the strength of my soul. **R.**



3.. All earth’s kings shall thank you / when they hear the words of your mouth. / They shall sing of the Lord’s ways: / ‘How great is the glory of the Lord!’ **R.**

4. You stretch out your hand and save me, / your hand will do all things for me. / Your love, O Lord, is eternal, / discard not the work of your hands. **R.**

SECOND READING

1 Cor 15:3-8, 11

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

I preach what they preach, and this is what you believe.

In the first place, I taught you what I had been taught myself, namely that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; and that he was raised to life on the third day, in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared first to Cephas and secondly to the Twelve. Next he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died; then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles; and last of all he appeared to me too; it was as though I was born when no one expected it.

But what matters is that I preach what they preach, and this is what you all believed.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

Longer form, 1 Cor 15:1-11.