



FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

Psalms 138:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 7-8

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

GATHERING

(An unlit candle and a bible open to this week's gospel are arranged on a table covered with green cloth. A goodly number of Pepperidge Farm Goldfish are scattered across the table.)

Following Luke, Jesus gives Simon Peter his first instructions in this week's gospel. He tells Simon Peter, "Do not be afraid, from now on you will be catching men." This week we ponder the implications of Jesus' words for ourselves. Last week we reflected on the prophet's call to speak the truth for God. When did you act with courage for the values of God this past week?

Prayer

(The candle is lit. The leader invites members to take slow, deep breaths in silence as they open themselves to the presence of God among them. After a time of quiet, the leader leads members in blessing themselves with the sign of the cross, after which an instrumental selection is played.

When the music is complete, the leader prays the petitions that follow. To each prayer, members respond, "Let me not be afraid."

Leader: Loving Teacher - as we listen to your words, let us hear your good news with new ears.

Helpful Leader - fill us with knowledge and wisdom so that we know where and how to cast our nets.

Patient Forgiver - Help us to forgive ourselves for the times we question your ways and not put all our trust in you.

Lamb of God - Give us the courage to accept the incredible bounty that you give us even when its newness and uncertainty frightens us.

Light of the world - Shine your light upon our lives so that we may see the right path in order to follow you.

Lord and Savior - You are always there for us without fail. As we continue on our life's journey, give us ears to hear, wisdom to understand, willingness to forgive and courage to accept your vision, so that we may follow you faithfully and bring others to you. In the one Spirit, we pray.

All: Amen.

HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.)

When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. Pausing between them, the leader then poses these two questions: "What draws you to this gospel?" "Where do you resist this gospel?" The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After a time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing.

The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)

Reflection

At the beginning of the baptismal rite for children, the priest or deacon addresses the infant/child by name and says, “The Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Savior by the sign of his cross.” Although most of us do not remember our own baptism, we know we were called, and still are called, to follow Jesus just as Simon Peter and the other fishermen were called that day on the shore of Lake Gennesaret.

Simon Peter was like so many of us. He worked hard and wanted to do good but, at least at the start, he did not put all his trust in Jesus. He called Jesus, “Master”, yet when he is initially given instructions, he questions Jesus; he thinks he knows better. He just doesn’t understand.

When Peter realized that Jesus’ instructions to cast his net again brought astounding results, he was ashamed that he did not trust in the Lord; he confessed his sense of unworthiness to be in Jesus’ presence. Jesus is not put off by Peter. He doubles down. Allaying his fear, he actually calls him to follow, to join him in an even bigger catch. Caught by Jesus, Simon Peter, the fisherman, learned from the experience and did as he was told. He and some of the others left everything to follow Jesus.

Most of us are not so unlike Simon Peter. We are drawn to Jesus. We want to follow his call and be part of his work, but sometimes we also want to approach our faith-life on the *cafeteria plan*. We willingly do some of what he asks of us, but not everything, because we still hold on to ourselves; we don’t fully trust him or like Simon; we think we know better.

“Do not be afraid,” says Jesus as he calls us today to go deeper, not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of helping him catch others for the reign of God. Let yourself be *caught*; then go fish.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

Think of a time you did something even though you questioned it only to find out it was absolutely the right thing to do.

What *stuff* do you need to leave behind in order to more fully follow Jesus?

When have you felt like you were being called by God to do something, but hesitated? Why?

When did you receive in abundance because you responded in some way to God?

With whom can you collaborate (spouse, friend, men's/women's group, parish ministry group, community organization) to spread Jesus' word and help others be drawn closer to him?

HEARING THE GOSPEL'S LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: "What do you hear Christ saying to us in hearing and sharing his word?" "What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?" "How are you/we being called to live in response to God's word?" After a pause, the leader invites the community to a time of conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)

Response in Action Suggestions

The Voice of the Martyrs (www.persecution.com) is a non-profit, inter-denominational Christian organization dedicated to assisting the persecuted church worldwide. Explore the website and see what this organization is doing to spread the gospel and bring people to God.

At Mass this weekend, notice someone you do not know and deliberately introduce yourself.

Take ten minutes a day this week for reflection and prayer. "Listening to the word of God" in the spirit of this week's gospel, notice how God might be calling you to fish, to help someone find his/her way closer to God. Then, go fish.

Prayer

(After a brief pause, the gospel or a portion of it, either of the other readings as appropriate or the responsorial psalm are proclaimed. The idea is to select a text that lends itself to inviting members to the time of silent prayer that follows. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: "What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?" "What

do you say to him in response?” The community pauses for a full five minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental selection may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two, or a brief expression that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally. The community receives this without additional comment.

Following this sharing, a member invokes the petitions that follow. To each prayer, members respond, “Give me courage, Lord.” When the petitions are complete, the leader prays as follows on behalf of all.)

Member: I want to spend time listening to your word.
I want to understand your word.
I want to know you better.
I want to forgive myself and others as you do.
I want to be a fisher of others for you.
I want to use all my gifts to fulfill your command.

Leader: Loving and gracious God, we are here this day as simple fishermen wanting to do your will. We want to bring others closer to you. Help us abandon our overly comfortable ways. Help us to leave behind the *stuff* we need to let go of to follow you more fully. In Jesus name and by the one Spirit, we pray.

All: Amen.

(Members exchange a sign of peace and enjoy the Goldfish.)