

## Invitation and Hospitality

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Luke 5: 1-11

We find in this week's gospel both invitation and hospitality. Invitation being the summons that Jesus makes to Simon Peter, and hospitality being the abundant catch of fish, signifying to Peter the abundance God will provide for our needs.

Jesus has hopped into a boat to begin preaching to the crowd that is gathered. Sitting out a bit from shore would have allowed Jesus' voice to travel and be magnified by the water. Interestingly, scripture scholars point out that this is the first time that Jesus' preaching is called the **"word of God."** It is this word of God that Peter responds to in the gospel. Having caught nothing during their nightly fishing, Peter and the rest of the crew are cleaning their nets.

Jesus makes his initial invitation, **"Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch."** Simon is initially skeptical of this request, indicating, **"Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing."** It is Peter's response, in faith, to Jesus that motivates Peter to respond.

There would have been no practical reason to have gone back out **"into deep water"** as the best fishing would have been at night. Peter knows it would be foolish to do so. And yet, on the command and invitation of Jesus, Peter takes the risk. The result is the overwhelming hospitality of Jesus to provide abundantly for the needs of all. God does not always work within our human understanding of the practical. Rather, God breaks forth into the impossible, providing us with generous and abundant blessings.

This hospitality is the kind of hospitality that cares for the total person. It is this kind of hospitality that welcomes the stranger, giving food, rest and shelter to those in need. It is this hospitality upon which Jesus builds his mission to the world.

Simon is the image of the imperfect human. And he knows it. Simon Peter is overcome by the Divine nature of this miracle and he realizes in the face of this event his sinfulness. **"Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."**

The greatness of Jesus' invitation and the beauty of Jesus' hospitality is that God does not deny us salvation based on our sinfulness, but in spite of our shortcomings and our weakness, we are all invited to follow Jesus.

**"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."** It is in response to Jesus' invitation and hospitality that **"they left everything and followed him."** May we recognize Jesus' invitation and bountiful hospitality, following him on his mission to the world.

Blessings!

  
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