

Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Luke 5:1-11

Dear Friends,

Like all Gospel passages, today's story has many levels. One that is especially helpful is the phrase that Jesus uses when he tells Peter to try again after a futile night's work where he failed to catch even a few fish. Jesus tells Peter, ***"Put out into the deep..." (Lk 5:4)***

Peter follows Jesus' command. A night of disappointment is transformed into a spectacular feast of abundance. Then, there is a total switch in gears. What had been so profoundly desired, the large catch of fish, all of a sudden, is put aside for a deeper and richer reality. ***"When they brought their boats ashore, they left everything and followed him." (Lk 5:11)***

What is the message for us today in this encounter between Jesus and Peter? The key is ***"Put out into the deep..." (Lk 5:4)***

In this scene, Peter is performing his ordinary tasks, his usual human experience. He is a fisherman. Jesus transforms it by inviting him to enter more deeply into the experience. He is teaching Peter and us that the true spirituality is not outside of life, different from our ordinary experience. We will encounter God by being more present to our life situation and all the demands and responsibilities it places on us. A call to be spiritual, to have a more meaningful experience of God, is not to move outside of life but to re-possess life at the deepest level. ***"Put out into the deep..." (Lk 5:4)***

The Good News is that God is present to life. We are not left to our destructive inclinations and the awful games we often play. Peter recognized his brokenness in this regard. He said, ***"Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man." (Lk 5:18)***

Jesus did not abandon Peter to his sinful ways nor will he abandon us. Grace and new life are always possible, always beckoning us. Like Peter, we have to ***"Put out into the deep..."(Lk 5:4)*** We will encounter a new, gracious reality. We will see that our heart will be free to let go of all the obstacles that keep us from walking with Jesus.