

## 5. September 2019 "But if you say so"

**Lk 5, 1-11**

***Now it happened that he 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 at the water's edge. The fishermen had got 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.' Simon replied, 'Master, 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 boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled both 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 awestruck at 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 people you will be catching.' Then, bringing their boats back to land they left everything and followed him.***

So overwhelmed and dismayed were the disciples of the unexpectedly great fishing that Peter did not feel worthy to be near Jesus.

It is true that we are not worthy of ourselves to live in communion with Jesus, the Son of God. We confess that every day in Holy Mass and that's right. If we look at the holiness of God and our limitations and sinfulness, then we can come to no other conclusion! It is good to keep this in mind so that we do not get proud because of the gifts that God has given us.

But this is only one side.

The other is that God loves us and makes us worthy in his love to receive him. He looks at us with the look of love and in this view he wants to wake us up to what we really are: children of God and created in his image. All that enslaves and binds us is to be taken away by him, so that we can breathe

again and become aware of the dignity of our vocation as man and as Christians. If we understand that this is a gift from God, then we are also saved from self-exaltation!

Peter and his companions experience something of God's power over nature and are shaken. Peter overcame by faith the logic of his human experience: *"Master, all night we struggled and caught nothing, but at your word I want to eject the nets."*

Actually, he could have completed the first part of the sentence and said: There is no point in going out again, today there are no fish! But he made a move of faith and trust. That was the key and here is an important lesson.

In our ministry of the gospel, there may be the experience that Peter made with the futile attempt to catch fish. We can transfer this example well to the mission, because then Peter and his people were called to this!

Perhaps we have tried again and again to win certain people to the gospel or to keep them away from wrong ways! Maybe we prayed and prayed and nothing has changed! Or we can think of a religious community that has only old members and does not have any new people to come. Almost one has already prayed wound his knees. But there are no new vocations!

The resignation can easily move in and you wonder what you might have done wrong! The resignation, however, is a human sensation of disappointment, which then hardly expects the intervention of God.

But God has his times and invites us to do things "in his word". We can always regain courage in God if we rely more on him than on our experiences. Faith transcends our human thoughts and feelings and gives us a completely different security in our lives.

"At his word" we go out again and try the same, what we did before and now something is changing! In the case of the text, there was an unexpected fishing, in the case of evangelization it can come to an unexpected breakthrough and an extension of the service, people we prayed for, leave the wrong ways, in the case of the religious community can come unexpected vocations!

God has his time. We have to do what we are asked to do. Peter was a fisherman until he was called by the Lord to "catch" people. We have to go our way as best we can and to fulfill our tasks. The fruitfulness of all our

efforts lies in the hands of God. As Mother Teresa said, "Let's see that we do not stand in the way of the Holy Spirit."

Let's accept today's invitation: "Lord, let us do our ministry entirely with regard to you, and help us not to despair when we see so little fruit. We wait for your word and then we will boldly go on and go where you want us! "