



Sunday Reflection

Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 6 February 2022

Epiphany 5

"They left everything and followed him." We are called, like the fishermen we hear about today, to follow the living Lord, the Lord of surprises and abundance.

Reflection for this week's Gospel teaching

"They caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break." Luke 5:6

An Illustration to set the scene

George was having a bad day after a bad week in a bad month.

He worked in telesales and he was nowhere near hitting his targets. His manager was breathing down his neck and he knew his job was on the line if matters didn't improve.

He also knew that the stress and worry of it all was working against him; that the prospective customers on the other end of the line could sense his growing desperation and that none of it was helping.

The pressure was mounting, and he simply couldn't let it go.

In his lunch break he took a walk to try to calm his mind.

As usual, he passed a Christian bookshop on his route around the block.

As he glanced in the window he saw the words writ large on a poster, accompanying a picture of a boat on a calm sea at sunset: **“Put out into the deep water and let down your nets”**.

Those words had a miraculous effect on George.

He went back to his desk feeling relaxed and refreshed and, lo and behold, he had far more success from that moment onwards.

Looking at the teaching of the Gospel

As we often see in the Gospels, Jesus is teaching.

At the end of the teaching, he must sense an inner prompting and he tells Peter to take the boat out and cast his net. Despite the fact that Peter has been working all night and caught nothing, and is more than a little sceptical, he obeys.

He is rewarded for his obedience with a haul of fish so massive that he has to summon help to take it on board.

Jesus has taken an anxious and stressful situation and completely turned it around, into joy, amazement and awe.

This is Peter’s moment of revelation.

He realises that it comes from God and is both overwhelmed by what he has just witnessed and acutely aware of his own sinfulness, like the prophet in today’s reading from Isaiah: **“Woe is me! I am lost... yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”**

This person in Peter’s boat may look very ordinary, but he has somehow brought God right into the middle of his work.

Peter begs the Lord to leave, so his sins will not be so sharply contrasted with the light of Jesus.

But, rather than going, Jesus reaches out to Peter with the beautiful words “**Do not be afraid**”.

This is a turning point in Peter’s life: the revelation of Jesus’ nature is followed by a confession of sin and a call to service, again like the reading from Isaiah.

Peter’s response is to leave everything and follow Jesus.

How can we reflect on the application to our lives?

All three of our readings today follow a pattern of **revelation, repentance and calling**.

In Luke’s Gospel we see that the presence of Jesus changes everything and brings fresh hope to any situation.

Life can sometimes seem to be a drudgery which leads only to frustration and fruitlessness, but not so when we are aware of Jesus’ presence and call on him.

Peter does what Jesus asks, even though he must have been very sceptical of any chance of success.

Obedience to God will always make a difference, even if we have our doubts at the time.

The life-changing revelation that Peter experiences happens at his place of work. God is not confined to church, but is for all times and all places, in all our daily struggles.

We need to widen our expectations and allow God to speak to us through all sorts of people and situations, no matter how hopeless things might seem.

And all three of our readings today teach us that we cannot manufacture divine revelation.

We can, however, ask for it.

In other words we need to understand, and remember even in times of frustration, anxiety and stress, that Jesus is with us in the boat.

"They caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break." *Luke 5:6*

Please share your response to this reflection to Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God' spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

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