

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Sep 3rd 2015

Today's Gospel reading has always been full of imagery for me. While reading the Gospel I can close my eyes and remember the colorful drawings of Jesus sitting in the boat along the shoreline, usually dressed in a white robe, speaking to the throngs gathered to hear him. (The Lake of Gennesaret, today known as the Sea of Galilee, is located about 20 miles east of Jesus childhood home of Nazareth.) The disciples straining to lift the nets into the boat brimming with fish is also an easy image to conjure up. But to me, the very heart of this Gospel, when Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men," does not create instant images for me.

So what was Jesus really saying to Simon, a professional fisherman, when he uttered these words and in turn, what is he saying today to us in this passage? Was Jesus challenging Simon to look beyond what he did for a living and to instead focus on what Simon could do to share the Good News? Today, is the challenge for us to be more than just dutiful parishioners who share our income with the church each Sunday when the offering plate is passed by? Like Simon are we being asked by Jesus to share the Good News; to be fisherman of men? I think so and if you agree with me then the challenge for us is to expand our efforts beyond the weekly sharing of our income. How can we become involved in our community so we can live out our faith with those who share our beliefs and also help guide into the net of safety those who are on the fringe of society, those who are disenfranchised, weak and lonely? Our gifts to support the church are worthy; but our active participation in living out the Gospel is the real work of the church that Jesus wants and needs us to do.

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