

SUNDAY PLUS

Gone fishing

Identity and direction

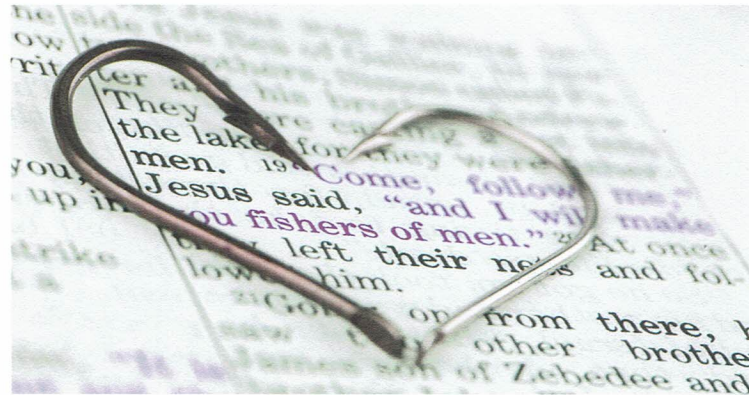
by
Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

When Jesus calls his disciples in today's Gospel, they all have their own work identities as fishermen; they all have their own direction – trawling the Sea of Galilee for fish. Their direction in life follows from their identity – where they go is decided by who they are. This process is going to be reversed by Jesus: the first thing Jesus challenges them to do is first to take a new direction in life: "Follow me". And if they change their direction and follow him, he promises them a

new identity – to make them fishers of people.

The call is into a personal relationship with Jesus; there is no discussion about a mission: that will come later. Mark emphasises this when he writes: "They went after him." They go after a person, not a job description; they follow a master, not a rule book. Who they will become will be based on their attachment to Jesus as his disciples or apprentices. They will look to him; they will learn from him; they will struggle to become other Christs.

The disciple is the one who is invited to remain in a loving relationship with Jesus. As the Passion of Jesus begins Peter will deny his own relationship with Jesus



in the courtyard of the high priest's palace. Later, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus will question Peter about the quality of his discipleship. Not surprisingly we

hear one question repeated: "Do you love me?"

Fr Denis McBride's many books are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

A fisherman's prayer

by Fr Eddie McGhee

As dark January faded on the River Tay the oystercatchers returned piping and shrilling. There were snowdrops on the banks. We caught nothing. February brought a few tentative daffodils and some crocuses. No fish. March looked more promising. Still we caught nothing! The kingfisher made a welcome guest appearance. The ospreys returned from their African odyssey in April. The world had taken on its familiar pattern, offering signs of hope as the fishless days lengthened. Still no fish! Those who think that fishing is just about catching fish are profoundly mistaken. For anglers, our enrichment comes from watching the world come alive again. A fish is a bonus. Had Peter and Andrew and James and John thought that fishing was about catching fish,

meeting Jesus was about to change that thinking forever. As we meet Jesus in the Eucharist, can we allow that same change to take place in us?

Lord, when we are blinded by the blindingly obvious, help us to see your hand in our world.

Fr Eddie McGhee, a serving prison chaplain in Scotland, is the author of Faith Inside: a guide for Catholics in prison, available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

Lord, fishermen expect to wait patiently. They will not always succeed in catching fish. They will sometimes face bad weather and stormy seas. Yet their patience teaches them to think about what is important in life. Lord, teach me patience. Amen.

Leaving behind...

by
Sr Thérèse Garman

Jesus calls in the midst of everyday realities. Simon, Andrew, James and John are busy with their nets when Jesus interrupts their daily routine. "Follow me!" is an invitation to a new life, to participate in God's saving work of change and growth, orienting our life in a new direction. There were no questions or goodbyes: they simply left and followed Jesus. What would our response be? "Where are we going? How long will we be gone? What should I take? Where will we stay? But Jesus offers only an invitation because this is the inner journey into the depths of our being. It's not about planning and packing

but leaving things behind, letting go. We'll never get anywhere new if we're unwilling to leave where we are.

So what are the nets that entangle us? What do we need to let go and leave behind to follow Jesus?

Sr Thérèse Garman is a Sister of Our Lady of Providence.

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At times we lose people because they don't understand what we are saying... Without the grammar of simplicity, the Church loses the very conditions which make it possible 'to fish' for God in the deep waters of his Mystery.

Pope Francis

Today: Jonah 3:1-5, 10 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20	Monday: 2 Samuel 5:1-7, 10 Mark 3:22-30	Tuesday: 2 Samuel 6:12-15, 17-19 Mark 3:31-35	Wednesday: 2 Samuel 7:14-17 Mark 4:1-20	Thursday: Acts 22:3-16 or 9:1-22 Mark 16:15-18	Friday: 1 Timothy 1:1-8 or Titus 1:1-5 Luke 10:1-9	Saturday: 2 Samuel 12:1-7, 10-17 Mark 4:35-41	Next Sunday: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 Mark 1:21-28
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