

## HOMILY for 5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year C

This Sunday's Gospel tells us a story about how Jesus helped Peter turned around a long, frustrated night of fishing into a successful one. Reflecting on it, I'm reminded of this cute story that I'd like to share with you.

The novice ice fisherman wasn't having any luck, but another man nearby was pulling up fish after fish through the ice. "What's your secret, sir?" the newcomer asked.

"Mmnpximdafglttmm," mumbled the man.

"I'm sorry, I couldn't understand you," said the novice.

"Mmnpximdafglttmm!" the fisherman mumbled again.

The neophyte shook his head & began to turn away, when the other man held up his hand. Spitting twice into his coffee cup, he said, "You've got to keep the worms warm!"

Anyway, in this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus told Simon Peter the following, "Put out into deep water & lower your nets for a catch." If we were Peter, how would we respond to it?

The first way Peter could respond to Jesus was to tell Him to mind His own business & refuse to do it. For Peter was a professional fisherman & already struggled all night long, but ended up catching nothing. So, Peter should not have taken Jesus' advice on fishing and should walk away from it. Besides, he was already frustrated after a terrible, long night of failure. He would not want to go back to face the same failure and get more frustrated. I'm sure we could relate to Peter as we have been encouraged to put our faith in God & let God work wonders in our lives after facing some heavy crosses. Like Peter, we are all good at something, but sometimes we have come home empty without knowing how tomorrow might turn out for us. We want to give up when, in prayer, the Lord encourages us to try it again the next day. Furthermore, we often think that we know better than God does & ignore the divine revelations in our prayers. But, that is what the world usually does.

Yet, we could act humbly & find an alternative answer like Peter did in this way: "Master, we have been hard at it all night long & have caught nothing; but if you say so, I will lower the nets." With that answer, Peter wanted to admit that he valued Jesus' advice & would follow it any time. He had slowly got to know who Jesus really was & would put Jesus' advice over his professional experience any day. His humility is admirable & was rewarded handsomely. Here is how this Sunday's Gospel tells us about the abundant reward for Peter: "...Upon doing this, they caught such a great number of fish that their nets were at the breaking point. They signaled to their mates in the other boat to come & help them. These came, & together they filled the two boats until they nearly sank." Peter evidently chose another response & humbly followed Jesus' advice. He ended up with so many fish that he had to call on another boat for help & filled both boats with his miraculous catch. That was the result of practicing humility & following the divine advice & guidance. That is what we should do if we would like to have a wonderful result in the end.

After Peter experienced this Sunday's miracle of catching lots of fish, he began to know his Master a little more & fell to the knees of Jesus saying, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." Clearly, Peter saw Jesus more than just a miracle worker. He was able to see Jesus as a holy & divine figure. That is why he felt that he was too sinful to be around Him. That is another blessing that the virtue of humility would be able to bring Peter & all of us, namely, realizing our own sinfulness. We live in a time that most people do not have any humility or any

sense of sinfulness. That is why our world continues to be in chaos and violence. That is why it struggles to see God or recognize divine revelations & messages in its daily life. Without God, our world would have a tough time dealing with its daily challenges. So, we got to show our world the importance of practicing humility to help it recognize its sinfulness & return to God. That is how we can help our world stay close to God & hence find divine guidance & assistance in its daily life.

However, Peter was not the only person who practiced humility & found a great result for it. Paul was another person in our Christian tradition who made that virtue an important part of his life. This Sunday's Second Reading shares with us Paul's humility as the following, "...I am the least of the apostles; in fact, because I persecuted the Church of God, I do not even deserve the name. But, by God's favor I am what I am. This favor of his to me has not proved fruitless. Indeed, I have worked harder than all the others, not on my own but through the favor of God." As you can see, Paul considered himself to be the lowest member among the Apostles because of his dark past when he persecuted the Church. He did not think that he deserves to count himself among the Apostles. He simply wanted to thank God for giving him a second chance with his life. Because of that divine favor, Paul was determined to work harder every day to show Jesus & His Good News to the world & also make up for his sinful past. Throughout his writing, one of the important virtues that Paul often tried to demonstrate to his faith communities was humility. He constantly encouraged his followers to act humbly & kindly toward one another. That is how they could stay close to the Lord Jesus & witness His love & presence to the world.

My dear brothers & sisters, pride is the Original Sin that we have inherited from Adam & Eve from the moment of our birth. That sin has caused us lots of problems in our human history & led us away from God. Today we are reminded that there is an anecdote for the Original Sin by practicing humility. Peter did it & was able to experience an awesome miracle & find the divine presence in Jesus. Hopefully we will imitate Peter & Paul & practice humility in our Christian living. That way the virtue of humility will bring us the same blessings & other wonderful miracles in our daily lives.