

GOSPEL PEARLS

Fishers of men

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On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done

this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. (Luke 5: 1-11)

The apostles' miraculous catch is a prophetic sign of what will be their vocation and that of bishops, their successors: casting the nets of proclaiming the Gospel into the sea of humanity. The catch will be beyond all human expectation, but unfortunately not all those who have followed the Gospel are also willing to meekly follow the teachings of the Church. Hence, just as the fish caught risked sinking the boats, so those who spread erroneous doctrines risk sinking the Church's barque. This is why bishops, in addition to being fishermen, are also called to be shepherds of souls, leading them to the pasture of sound doctrine in continuity with what Jesus taught. Do you have a spiritual director to whom you can refer questions and resolve your doubts on matters of faith and morals, not only in the abstract sense, but in your real life as well?