

GOSPEL PEARLS

The fascination of the word of God

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In quel Jesus was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats – it was Simon's – and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.' 'Master,' Simon replied, 'we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' And when they had done

this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point. When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.' For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch.' Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him. (Luke 5, 1-11)

A fisherman's success, once he has cast his nets, depends exclusively on Providence. So Simon, the future Saint Peter, at Jesus' invitation casts his nets, despite a night of fruitless work. The event constitutes a prophetic anticipation of the future apostolic mission: the souls that Saint Peter and his successors will fish with the nets of Grace will be attracted not by human capabilities and the opinions of its priests, or by their eloquence and pastoral plans, but by their fascination with the eternal Word of Jesus, the only One capable of revealing to each one their true identity and their vocation.