



### **First Sunday of Luke**

In today's Gospel lesson, we see the "three pillars" (Simon, James, and John) in an unflattering light. Even though they hadn't caught anything, Jesus finds them cleaning their nets. They should have been hard at work fishing. Nonetheless, Jesus encourages them to "push out further into deeper water," and, lo and behold, they catch so many fish that they can barely haul them all in. This inspires a conversion on Simon's part, and Jesus responds by telling him that he will now be fishing for "people." The Lake of Gennesaret is often poetic language in scripture that symbolizes the Mediterranean Sea. Jesus's request is to go out into the deep "waters" of the Roman Empire and make converts. After Christ's resurrection, Paul will find these same three "pillars" again not "fishing." Now, they've stayed within the safety of Jerusalem and argue that Gentiles are "sinners" and unworthy of conversion. However, as Paul preaches in his letters, only when Simon realizes that he is no better than Gentile "sinners" and makes such a confession as he did in today's lesson, will he become "Peter, the Rock." And, only then will he fulfill his mission to be a "fisher of people."

**Scripture:** Luke 5:1-11

**Bottom Line:** "Fishing for people" includes serving others so that they see the gospel of Jesus Christ in action.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What "work" have you been doing "all night long," like Simon and the others, that hasn't produced any results for the Lord? How might Jesus's call to "go further out into the deep" to "fish for people" apply to you? Do you trust that heeding Jesus's call will produce a lot of "fish"? Why or why not?
2. When Peter sees the results of trusting Jesus's word, he asks Jesus to depart from him because he's a sinner. What sins do you think keep you from Jesus? How have you lacked faith in Jesus's words? How might you confess your sins and start down a new path to follow Jesus? What will this look like?
3. Our world is very different than Jesus's world. Yet, his call for us to be "fishers of people" is the same. How is it the same? How is it different? What does that look like in today's world? For the disciples, the "deep waters" is the Roman Empire, what are "deep waters" for us? How can we use technology to enhance our calling? What other ways can we "cast our line" into the "deep waters"?

### **Moving Forward**

How often do we see ourselves as superior to others? How often do we want to keep the gospel within our own community, only for those "like us"? Or, how often are we inward-looking by spending money on ourselves instead of "fishing for people"? Today's gospel is a call for us to realize we are no better than anyone else—Orthodox Christian or not. It's also a call for us to overcome our reluctance and timidity to serve others and introduce them to the gospel of Christ. Doing this requires that we leave everything behind and follow Jesus. As we saw last week, this is what leads to life—for us and others. Heeding Jesus's call is to be transformed and become a new person. So, what's preventing you from becoming a "fisher for people" today? How will you overcome this obstacle?

### **Changing Your Mind**

"Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him." (Luke 5:10-11)