

Homily for the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

We are all called by God. In both Matthew and Mark's Gospel, we have the story of "*the calling of Peter*". But in Luke's Gospel, his story has the extra details of Jesus preaching to the crowds from Peter's boat by the shore and the miraculous catch of fish. In Luke's story, Peter is especially mentioned because Luke wants to stress Peter's vocation and Peter's recognition of Jesus, in the miracle of the fishes.

Jesus, having preached from Peter's boat to the crowds, now tells Peter to row out into the deep part of the lake to fish. Now Peter knows that the best time to fish with a net is during the night, when the fish come close to the surface. Therefore, if the fish didn't come near the surface that night then there is no chance that they will do so, during the day.

However, Peter shows great trust in the power of Jesus, for he says "*... but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.*" Peter was willing to try the impossible because he trusted in Jesus. And his confidence was rewarded. The net was filled to breaking point. They called the other boat, and the net held enough fish to fill both boats, until they were almost sinking.

Peter recognised the sanctity of Jesus, in this miracle. He believed that Jesus must be close to God. But he also knew his unworthiness, and sinfulness, and he felt he should not be near to such a holy man. But then Jesus' response, is to tell Peter, what his future vocation is to be. For Peter is not going to catch fish anymore but catch people, for the kingdom of God.

Luke's story, primarily stresses Peter's call but it also tells us, that Jesus calls three other men, because we hear, that the three men immediately come ashore, leave their boats, and nets, and follow Jesus.

But oh how! the wisdom of God, is so different from the wisdom of men. Jesus wasn't restricted, in his choice of men to lead his Church. There were many highly educated priests and scribes in Jerusalem,

whom he could win over. They were men who could preach and instruct, so much more eloquently than Peter. There were Roman officers in Israel, who were highly educated and would be much more eagerly listened to, by the Gentiles. There were Greek philosophers, whose very name, would add prestige to the Gospel message, if they were Apostles.

Yet it was to none of these, that Jesus entrusted the arduous task of spreading the Good News. It was to none of these that Jesus gave the keys of his Kingdom. Jesus chose from among the unknown, unlettered fishermen of Galilee. Because Jesus was not influenced in his judgement, by external qualifications. He judged a person's heart and will. Jesus knew then and he knows today, the true worth of every person.

The truths that Jesus was trusting to his Apostles, were not truths based on earthly wisdom, which would require eloquence, and prestige, in order to expound them. His truths were eternal, divine truths, that needed no human propaganda, they needed no extra help from wise men.

Therefore, by selecting those Apostles that he did select he demonstrated his divine wisdom and he demonstrated the divine religion, that we profess. You see! our religion is not man-made. It is divine. God alone, is its author. Jesus, its teacher. The Holy Spirit, its guide.

Today we can thank God, for our religion, with its clearly-drawn map of salvation. But let us show our appreciation by doing our own little part, as humble Apostles weak but willing helpers of Christ. This we can do without eloquence and prestige.

We can do it by living as true Christians in our homes, in our places of work and in our recreation times. We can do it by carrying our cross daily and patiently and ever ready to give a hand when our neighbours' cross is heavy. For this is Christian eloquence, this will be a true apostleship of Christ because actions speak louder than words.