

## Third Sunday in Ordinary Time - Lectionary: 67

### Reading 1 [IS 8:23—9:3](#)

First the Lord degraded the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the end he has glorified the seaward road, the land west of the Jordan, the District of the Gentiles. Anguish has taken wing, dispelled is darkness: for there is no gloom where but now there was distress. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as people make merry when dividing spoils. For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder, and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian.

**Responsorial Psalm** [PS 27:1, 4, 13-14](#) - R. (1a) The Lord is my light and my salvation.

### Reading 2 [1 COR 1:10-13, 17](#)

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose. For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers and sisters, by Chloe's people, that there are rivalries among you. I mean that each of you is saying, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning.

### Gospel [MT 4:12-23 OR 4:12-17](#)

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen. From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him. He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.

### Homily

Today, we start again, and we hear about the beginning of Jesus' ministry, as Jesus chooses his apostles. He leaves Nazareth and he settles in Capernaum, a busy fishing and trading center on the Sea of Galilee. And while he's walking along the Sea, He runs into a few fishermen, named brothers Peter and Andrew, and then a little later, another set of brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, and then later He encounters a few others, and he asks them to join him.

He says to them: "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Now most of us will hear the phrase "fishers of men" and immediately we realize Jesus was using a sort of "play on words" to call a few fishermen to follow him. But as I hear these words, I'm immediately transported to the shores of the Sea of Galilee two thousand years ago. Because these words from Jesus seem to express a certain authority for me, so much so, that whenever I hear them, I almost get chills. Because in faith, I think, we all know this is what we are all called

to do to be “fishers of men”. It's because we realize these words are actually like an encounter with God, and it's meant for every one of us. These words touch our hearts, and our minds and our souls, like they apparently did for the Apostles. They simply dropped everything, and followed Him, and in the end, they learned everything they needed to know from Him, to share their faith with others, and eventually start the church.

Jesus is calling us now to keep that church alive. So how can we become the person that Jesus wants of us to be, as “fishers of men?” Well, first, we need to determine the best way for us to share our faith, so we might catch them, so to speak, to be interested in say, coming to church with us. That's what the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is all about. Suggest you learn more about the RCIA, then bring along your friend and volunteer to be their sponsor. Or encourage a family member who is Catholic, but who is not going to church anymore, to come along with you. Tell them that you'll even pick them up, and maybe take them to breakfast after. Now I realize this isn't always easy, but we all need to move out of our comfort zones, take some risks, and venture out into areas that we might not normally go.

And of course, we need to go where the fish are, and not wait for them to come to us. This could be right there at home, at work, or at school. And it means we need to meet people where they're at, not only physically, but also where they are emotionally, as well. We need to try to meet them wherever they might be on their journey. This means to respect where they happen to be at, to value them for what they have to say, and recognize they may have actually experienced some of God's grace already.

We may talk to them, and want them to have an encounter with God through us, but it may turn out to be exactly the opposite. They may actually surprise us, and instead, they are more aware of God in their life, than we are in ours. We should be ready for that, and to be open to that.

Then, we should be willing to cast the widest net possible, and to not be too selective when it comes to sharing our faith. This means looking for many different types of opportunities and situations, where we can give witness to what we believe. And this certainly doesn't mean beating people over the head with it, or trying to steer every one of our conversations in that direction. I just mean that we shouldn't limit ourselves to sharing our faith strictly on our terms, or as we might choose to share it.

We also need to have an eye for the right moment. The wise fisherman knows well, that there are times when it is hopeless to fish. He knows when to cast his line, and he knows when not to cast it. We need to choose the right moment. There are times when others will welcome the truth. There are times when truth will move them, but there are times when the truth will upset them, in their opposition to the truth. The wise person knows there is a time to speak and there's a time to be silent.

And like any good fisherman, it's important to have patience and persistence, and to not give in to the temptation to give up when we feel we're not making much progress, or not making much of a difference. Remember the line from the Gospel of Luke, “Master, we have worked hard all night and we have caught nothing.” And you might remember how that story turned out. Persistence DOES bear fruit. We might not always see it right away or even be aware of it or understand it, when it happens. That's not our role to recognize when the other person gets it. That's God's. Our role is simply to be faithful.

So as I said earlier, along with Jesus' apostles, we now need to start again. We now get another opportunity to make a difference in other people's lives - even people that we might know pretty well. Are we ready to do that? Jesus is asking us to humbly let His Father work in our lives. So are we going to let Him do that for us? It can actually be much easier than we think. Perhaps we DO know someone that we can ask to come to church with us. And perhaps we can ask to pick them up and bring them along with us. Today can start the time that God has given us to make a difference in someone else's life. It can actually be kind of an adventure.