

Your Christian Vocation

Resources: Prayer Services

Going Fishing

Use this complete prayer service with the Chapter 1, section 1 of Your Christian Vocation. You may also choose to use only individual parts of the prayer service.

Needs:

- copies as needed or projection
- pen and notebook paper or prayer journal for each student
- a large picture of “The Miraculous Draught of Fishes” by Peter Paul Rubens either printed, or pulled up from the internet and projected
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gandalfsgallery/7186982364>

Prayer Introduction

What do you think when you hear that each person is called to be a saint? Perhaps you think of martyrs, or someone who spends their life in prayer. Perhaps the call to be holy seems unattainable, or even undesirable. It is unattainable on our own. But the truth is that, through your baptism, you have been given all the grace and gifts necessary to become a saint! A saint is simply someone who follows the Lord. Today, using art and Scripture, you will reflect on the call of some of Jesus’ disciples to themselves become saints. The prayerful study of art can awaken our visual sense, stirring up the interior thoughts and feelings, and bring us into relation with God in a powerful way. Art has the ability to move us profoundly. In your reflection today perhaps you will feel God calling to you personally. Use this prayer time to reflect on this image, Scripture, and the truth that Jesus also calls you to come follow him. During our reflection feel free to write down any thoughts that come to you or responses to the questions posed.

Opening Prayer

Leader: (Have the students sit down and get situated, freeing themselves from distractions. Begin with the Sign of the Cross. Bring up the image of “The Miraculous Draught of Fishes.”) Holy Spirit, come into this space. Inspire our hearts and minds with what you want to tell us. Renew us through this painting and your word in Scripture. You have called each one of us to be holy. Teach us through this reflection what holiness looks like for each one of us. Help us to find a particular call to come closer to you.

Scripture Reading

Reader 1: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (Luke 5: 1-11),

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.” When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that they were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Meditation

Video (See)

Leader: (Have the students write their answers in their journals/on pieces of paper. Make sure to give long enough pauses between questions so that they can reflect and write.) What is the objective meaning of this picture? What is your initial impression of it? What people and things are included? Do you see Jesus on the right with his hand outstretched? Do you see his disciple, probably Peter, next to him with a surprised look?

Notice the activity in the painting. It is as if a single moment has been captured of a scene bustling with activity. The men are heaving in the huge load that Jesus has just commanded them to cast out for. Yet, though it is Peter's boat and his catch, Peter himself has lost all attention for the fish. Instead he is captivated by the person who has done this miracle. He has realized in this moment the power and presence of God. We can imagine that this is the moment when Peter, who is astonished, is saying, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." The miracle Jesus does for Peter and the disciples is a very personal one. He has taken their livelihood, fulfilled it to the max, and then called them to something bigger than they have yet experienced. Faced with such a sign, a response is imperative. Look at the picture again. Is there anything else in it that speaks to you?

Meditatio (Meditation)

Leader: The saints recommend a form of prayer where you insert yourself into the scene. Where are you in this picture? What does this image say to you as you put yourself into it? What does it feel like to you? Can you hear the birds overhead, the rush of the water on the shore, the smell of seawater and fish, and the tenor of Jesus' voice?

How do you see yourself today in Jesus' calling of the disciples, especially Peter? Have you considered that Jesus has performed just such a miracle in your own life? Once you were without his life in you, but by the waters of your baptism a rush of grace flooded your soul! Now, Jesus is calling to you to follow him. Does something need to change in your life to follow the Lord? Holiness is a lifetime of choices. If you haven't chosen Jesus yet, he is inviting you to do so now.

Oratio (Prayer)

Leader: Allow your meditation to lead you into a prayer to God. As you imagine yourself there, what do you feel called to in this encounter with Christ? Peter,

confronted with the magnitude of Jesus' power and presence, made a choice to follow after him. Have you encountered Christ in a way that transcends your previous perceptions and expectations? Jesus showed his power and love to Peter in a very personal way. He desires the same for you. What do you say to God in response to this image? Speak these words to God from the heart.

Contemplatio (Contemplation)

Leader: Now might be the time to close your eyes, or look at the painting without words. God desires to give you a grace from the painting and Scripture. An encounter with beauty should guide you to a resolution in your life. Jesus invited Peter to follow him. Pope St. John Paul II said at a World Youth Day in 2000:

It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness. He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you. He is the beauty to which you are so attracted. It is he who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your heart your most genuine choices . . . It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives.

Actio (Action)

Ask God what needs to be transformed by his grace in your life so that you are free to respond to his call. What might it take to pursue holiness in your life? What might be the benefit of a response like Peter's?

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray together.

All: Jesus, thank you for the gift of your love. We know that you have given each of us what we need to be saints. Renew us, Lord, in your call to holiness. Amen.