

Read

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

Psalm 138:1-2a, 2b-3,
4-5, 7-8

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or
15:3-8, 11

Luke 5:1-11

LIVING THE WORD

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 6, 2022



REFLECTION

The overwhelming narrative in today's Church is that people are leaving in droves. Pews are a quarter-filled at best for Sunday Mass. Youth ministers struggle to compete for time against sports and other school activities, and invite teens back to the parish. And then there is the tragic saga of the clerical abuse crisis, leaving many of the faithful hurt and wondering why they should stay involved with the Church.

Today's Gospel paints a different picture of the Church, one that may spark hope for us now. The people "pressed in" to hear the Word. They pressed into the Word himself, Jesus Christ. Their bodies leaned forward, a motion that signals, "I don't want to miss this!"

What would it look like if we all recommitted to pressing in on the Word? Lean into Christ when you need support. Immerse yourself in his wisdom. Allow the Word to embrace you. Keep pressing in even—perhaps especially—when you feel sad or anxious or distracted. There is no doubt the people who make up church on earth have succumb to sin in too many ways. There is also no doubt that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life and can help us return to God.



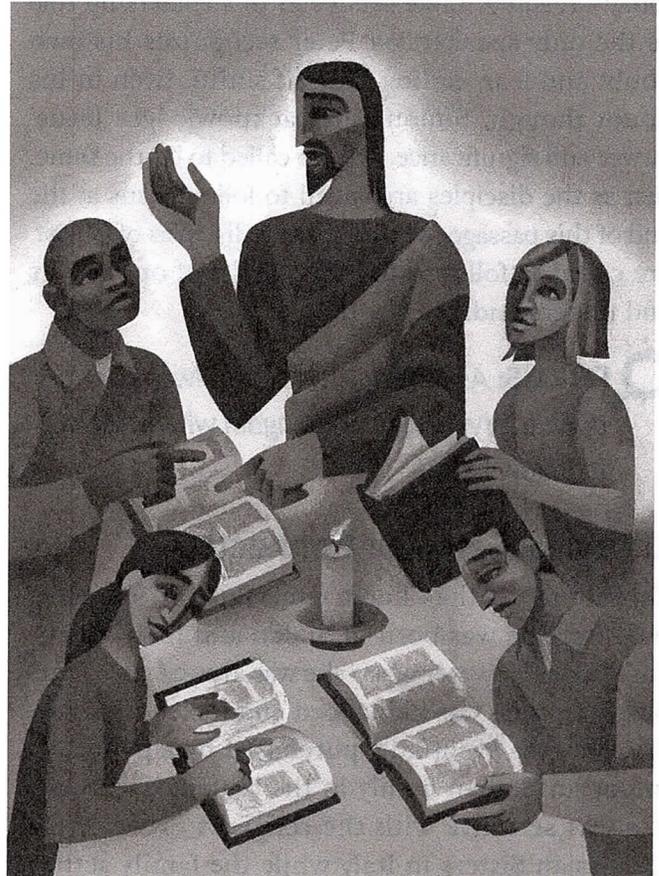
QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are your thoughts on the state of the Church today?
- ❖ How can you commit to pressing in on the Word this week?



ACTION

Page through the Bible until you land on a passage that speaks to your life today. Perhaps it's an Old Testament story like when God calls Abraham or when Ruth stays loyal to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Maybe something from the Gospels resonates with you, like when Jesus felt alone in the garden or when a group of friends went fishing. Read through the passage a few times, in one sitting or throughout the day. Pray with it. When you start to get antsy, press into the Word even more.





February 6, 2022

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #75C

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

Psalms 138:1-2a, 2b-3, 4-5, 7-8

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or 15:3-8, 11

Luke 5:1-11

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Today's Gospel passage, the miraculous catch of fish and call of Simon Peter, is unique to the Gospel according to Luke (though John includes a similar miracle after the resurrection; see John 21:1-11). In today's reading, Luke sets Peter in a leadership role as the only speaker, yet Peter recognizes his own doubt and fear, calling himself sinful. Even in his doubt though, Simon Peter acknowledges Jesus' power and significance. We are called to do the same. Just as the disciples are called to follow Jesus at the end of this passage, we, the present disciples of Christ, are called to follow him in the midst of our doubts and understanding.

Q FOCUS: *As disciples, we must always be open to trying again and again when we fail to follow Christ.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On February 8, the Church remembers St. Josephine Bakhita. She was born in Sudan and had a happy childhood. However when she was around nine years old, Josephine was kidnapped and forced into slavery. She was eventually purchased by a politically important Italian family in the region. Eventually she was sent live with the religious order of the Canossian Sisters in Italy while the family settled some accounts. When the family returned for her, she refused to go because there was no legal ground

for her slavery, especially in Italy. She was baptized and became a sister. She shared her story with others and spent the rest of her life ministering to others working for her community. She is the patron saint of human trafficking victims and Sudan.

Church Teaching Connection

"The word of God constantly shows us how God challenges those who believe in him 'to go forth'. . . . In our day Jesus' command to 'go and make disciples' echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church's mission of evangelization, and all of us are called to take part in this new missionary 'going forth'. Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 20).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 5:1-11

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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 the boats 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.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Jesus teaches us how to be disciples through stories, teachings, and his own actions. Today's Gospel reading is found only in the Gospel according to Luke and can be read as a calling story. Although this story doesn't include parables or any teachings, we witness an important encounter between Jesus and the first disciples. Their call to discipleship begins for them like every other day but something extraordinary happens.

► How do you feel when things aren't working out for you?

► Have you ever received unwanted advice from a well-meaning friend?

The dialogue between Jesus and Simon Peter is a situation familiar to many of us. We've done something and it is just not working, no matter what we try. And then someone comes along to offer their opinion when you didn't really want it. Your reaction might be something like, "That's what I've already been trying!" We can imagine how Simon felt in this situation. Jesus tells them to lower their nets, one more time in deep water. Understandably, Simon's response is "Okay, but . . .," showing some reluctance. Why would it be any different from all of the other times they lowered their nets to find nothing? But he obeys Jesus anyway and is rewarded with an abundance of fish.

Simon Peter is an example for us as Christian disciples. Disciples must try and try again. We don't always do the right thing the first time. Sometimes we do the right thing, but it doesn't work out as we expected. We don't always trust God right away. But we're invited to try again, and to dig deeper, much like the way that Jesus invites the fishermen to lower their nets in deep water.

Think of something that you have been struggling to change (for example, your prayer routine, homework or study habits, a relationship with a family member or a friend).

► What steps have you taken to make these changes?

► What has gotten in the way?

► How could you go deeper with these changes?

One of the hardest lessons of discipleship is knowing what to change and when to change it. As followers of Christ, our actions should come from our trust in the Lord. Sometimes we are focused so much on our external actions that we forget the intentions behind that action. We may beat ourselves up about not trusting in the first place, like Simon Peter does. He tries to send Jesus away, acknowledging that he himself is a sinful man who doesn't deserve to be in relationship with the Lord. However, God is good, merciful, and full of compassion. Jesus invites the men to follow him and become his disciples.

► Think of a time when you doubted a friend, family member, or even God. Can you relate to Peter's feelings of guilt?

Even though Jesus doesn't speak in parables or offer great wisdom through teaching in this Gospel passage, we learn that even when we doubt, we are deserving of a relationship with God. In fact, God will take these experiences of doubt and transform them to make us stronger messengers of the Gospel and better evangelizers. We are called to inspire others to love Christ through our words and actions.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 124.

God loves us even when we doubt and offers us a way of discipleship.

God calls us deeper into faith, making deep changes in the way that we live and follow Christ.

Disciples evangelize by sharing the joy of the Gospel with others.

Act on the Word

Invited to Deeper Faith

For this activity, you will need drawing paper; markers; other art supplies as available, paper or journals, and pens.

Have the teens reflect on who has brought them to a deeper appreciation of their faith and a closer relationship with God. This could be family members, friends, leaders in their parish or school, or the witness of the saints. For those teens who are artistically inclined, they can sketch or create a collage of images that represent these witnesses. Be sure to have them include words or phrases that describe how these individuals were/are witnesses of the Gospel. If the young people do not want to sketch or create a collage, they can journal about the witnesses of faith they have encountered. Finish the activity by having the young people sharing their reflections and discuss some ways that they can become witnesses of Christ to others.

Closing Prayer

*Merciful God,
in you we live and move and have our being.
May we always respond with trust to Jesus
when he meets us at the seashore of our lives.
Fill us with wisdom and guide our efforts to
do your will.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.