



Diocese of Rockville Centre New Evangelization

"... the Church needs genuine witnesses for the new evangelization: men and women whose lives have been transformed by meeting with Jesus, men and women who are capable of communicating this experience to others. The Church needs saints. All are called to holiness, and holy people alone can renew humanity."

*Pope John Paul II
August 2004*

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Theme: Peter

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ENCOUNTER: With The Lord Jesus

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.

Luke 5: 1-11

For your reflection:

- I. This passage shows the initiative of Jesus in reaching out to Peter. Jesus wants this encounter with Peter to take place. Do you realize and perceive how events in your life may reflect Jesus' reaching out to you?
- II. Though Peter is the fisherman, Jesus instructs him where and when to cast his nets. Peter seems reluctant but he obeys nevertheless. What type of response do you give to Jesus' commands? Why?
- III. Peter's encounter with Jesus leads him to learn more about himself and to admit the truth of his reality ("... I am a sinful man.") This honesty on Peter's part leads to Jesus' call to follow Him. (Jesus came to call sinners.) Do you also admit the truth of your life as you encounter Christ or do you prefer to hide it from Him?

*"Do not be afraid; from now on
you will be catching men."*



CONVERSION: To The Way Of The Lord

Then he made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. At once (Jesus) spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how (strong) the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God."

Matthew 14: 22-33

For your reflection:

- I. Peter and the others were in a storm while Jesus was at prayer. Again, Jesus goes out to them to save them. Have you been able to come to the point in your spiritual life that you are more trusting than before that in life's storms you can understand ("see") Jesus coming out to you?
- II. Because we need to be converted, our prayers are like Peter's words in this scene: "Lord, if it is you ...". What words do you find yourself uttering during difficult and trying moments?
- III. Jesus asked Peter "... why do you doubt?" He might also be asking us the same questions. How do you answer Him?

EUCCHARIST: "I Am Not Worthy To Receive You"

As a result of this, many (of) his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."

John 6: 66-69

For your reflection:

- I. The crowds leave Jesus because He said that only the one who eats His flesh and drinks His blood will have eternal life. This is happening in our own day as well. Many Catholics "believe" they no longer have to go to Mass on Sunday. What do you believe?
- II. Peter makes a strong profession of faith on his own behalf and for all the other disciples as well. Do you better understand the Pope's role as visible head of the Church through these words?
- III. "... that you are the Holy One of God"; do you have these words of Peter very much in your heart and mind every Sunday at Mass?

HOLINESS: "So Be Perfect As Your Heavenly Father Is Perfect"

As Peter was passing through every region, he went down to the holy ones living in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been confined to bed for eight years, for he was paralyzed. Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed." He got up at once. And all the inhabitants of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated means Dorcas). She was completely occupied with good deeds and almsgiving. Now during those days she fell sick and died, so after washing her, they laid (her) out in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs where all the widows came to him weeping and showing him the tunics and cloaks that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed. Then he turned to her body and said, "Tabitha, rise up." She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up. He gave her his hand and raised her up, and when he had called the holy ones and the widows, he presented her alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many came to believe in the Lord.

Acts 9: 32-42

For your reflection:

- I. These verses reflect the dynamism of the early Church. We notice Peter's going from community to community. Believers are called "holy ones" or saints. Why do you think this term is used?
- II. How do you explain Peter's special gifts of healing in light of his past doubts, failures and sinfulness?
- III. What do these verses say to you in terms of how we view parish life and the life of its members as they exist today?

MISSION: "You Are Witnesses Of These Things"

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." (Jesus) said to him, "Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

John 21: 15-19

For your reflection:

- I. In these verses we have one of the most beautiful dialogues in all of Sacred Scripture. Jesus' questions and Peter's responses lead Jesus to propose a mission to Peter. How does Pope Benedict XVI fulfill this mission today for the universal Church?
- II. Peter was "distressed" at Jesus asking a third time "Do you love me? Why was it appropriate and right for Jesus to do so?
- III. The goal of mission is to "glorify God". Is this how you live your life on earth?



Pope Benedict XVI



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