

**5th Sunday OT – Luke 5:1-11** “The Disciples left everything and followed Jesus.” ***They didn’t leave everything***, and what they did leave took years to let go. As for their lives, they deserted Jesus to die on the cross alone. Only until after they received the Holy Spirit were the early Christians ready to let go of everything, even their lives. Throughout the gospels, Jesus’ followers expected him to fulfill their expectations of what a messiah should be. However, After receiving the Holy Spirit, they were ready to accept what Jesus’ expectation of a messiah would be like.

The beginning of the new church year cycle, our readings are from Luke which begin with Jesus’ calling of his disciples. It was their first experience of Jesus through his ***Miracle of the Catch of Fish***. One could say that Jesus caught the disciples. All night long the disciples were fishing and caught nothing. Then this carpenter comes along and tells them to drop their nets just out from the shore. And Peter condescendingly does so. Maybe he thought he would humor this itinerate preacher. We know the rest of the story; the boat almost sank because of the catch.

The highlight of the miracle is that Peter, still dazed by the wonder of the miracle makes his ***confession of faith***. For the early Church the ***boat*** represented the ***Ecclesia***, or the ***Church***. On its own the Church can catch nothing. But our ***confession of faith*** is the starting point in our relationship with the Lord, as it was for the disciples. It helps, but it is not the goal, since after three years with Jesus, miracles and all, they deserted him to die on the cross alone, Judas betrays him and Peter denies him three times. So, what is missing from Peter’s confession of faith?

Let’s look at this same miracle in John’s gospel for a clue. His miracle of the fish takes place ***after the Resurrection***. Peter says, let’s go fishing, and John and James join him. Jesus is dead, (wipes his hands). We still have to feed our families. Life goes on. So, they fish all night and catch nothing, not surprising. As they head to shore, Jesus is standing there but they did not recognize him. “Have you caught anything?” Jesus asks. “No,” they answered. Then Jesus, the resurrected carpenter, told them to put their nets on the other side of the boat!

The miracle of the multiplication of the fish was repeated and their boat, the Ecclesia, was so full that they had trouble getting the fish to shore. The beloved disciple recognized Jesus, the disciple whom Jesus loved. And then, instead of Peter’s confession of faith, Jesus asks for his ***confession of love***.

"Peter, do you love me?" three times he asks! Faith without love is powerless. The Church without love is a boat without a rudder. It's going nowhere. Without the Holy Spirit our church is marooned. At Vatican II the Holy Spirit put a **rudder** back on our boat. Since then, we keep trying to remove it!

In John's gospel at the foot of the cross, Jesus hands his mother over to the Beloved disciple, "Mother, behold your son." This beloved disciple goes **unnamed**, since we are the beloved for those who answer Jesus' question, "Do you love me?" When we accept the offer to follow Jesus out of love, then we become sons and daughters of Jesus' Mother. "Son and daughters, behold you Mother." This is the most precious gift that the Church, the Ecclesia, the boat, offers to the world. Mary and the Beloved disciple with the women were the ones standing at the foot of the cross witnessed divine love nailed to a tree. They did not run away.

A person from Spain wrote this snippet in the synodal document **Enlarge the Space of Your Tent**, (or enlarge your boat). "Formation for synodality," he writes, "intersects all dimensions of Christian life and can only be an integral formation that includes personal, spiritual, theological, social and practical dimensions. For this, a community reference is essential, because one principle of 'walking together' is the **formation of the heart**, the heart, which transcends concrete knowledge and embraces the whole of life."

The synod presents Jesus' relationship with the disciples as a primary example of this process, "...the way in which Jesus formed the disciples constitutes the model we need to follow. He did not merely impart teaching but he shared his life with them. Through the example of his own prayer. He drew from them the request: "Teach us to pray." By feeding the crowds He taught them not to dismiss the needy. By walking to Jerusalem, He showed the way to the Cross.

What attracts people to Church is *good liturgy*, but what keeps them is the **love** that is shown through the worshiping community. It is the liturgy that brings the faith community together every week and fills us with **the love of Jesus** through his Word, Sacrament, and especially in his presence in each and every one of us here where we continue our own formation of our hearts.

Teresa of Avila,

Christ has no body now but yours.

No hands, no feet on Earth but yours.

Yours are the only eyes with which his compassion can still look out on a troubled world.

Yours are the only feet with which he can go about doing good.

Yours are the only hands with which he can bring his blessings to his people.

Christ has no body now on Earth but yours.

I would add that ***"Christ has no heart on Earth to love but ours!"***