

SERMON
On the Gospel Reading of the 1st Sunday of Luke (Lk. 5:1-11)
(27 September 2026)

Today's Gospel tells us of one of the Lord's miracles, which nevertheless carries a very profound meaning and symbolism beneath its seemingly simple narrative.

Peter, together with John and James, are fishing from their boat throughout the night on the Lake of Gennesaret, but by morning their nets are completely empty. Christ then tells Peter to go out again into the middle of the lake and cast the nets once more. Peter replies that they have laboured all night in vain and have caught nothing, but because Christ has asked him to do it, he will. It is almost as though he is saying to Christ, "For your sake I will do it, simply because I do not want to disappoint you." This is that noble willingness of heart which, sadly, we Christians do not always possess when it comes to doing God's will.

Then something astonishing happens: the nets become so full that the disciples' small boat is in danger of sinking under the weight, and so the other boat nearby hastens to help them. Faced with this wondrous event, Peter is overcome. He falls to his knees before Jesus and, in a profound expression of humility, tells Christ to depart from him because he is a sinful man. The same awe seizes the others as well. Yet Christ reassures the astonished Peter: "Do not be afraid," He tells him. "From now on you will catch men." And immediately they all leave their work and follow the Lord.

At first glance, the event might seem to have no particular significance. For what purpose would there have been in their earning a little more money that day, only to find themselves in the same situation again the next day? Was this the Lord's purpose—to provide temporary relief from the disciples' poverty? Obviously not. The issue is much deeper: it is obedience to the Lord. Christ tells Peter something that seems unreasonable, yet although his mind tells him not to do it, his heart cannot refuse Christ anything. And notice, my brothers and sisters, that the Lord tells Peter, "Get back into the boat and cast the nets," when He could simply have told him, "Cast the nets from here, from the shore." Obviously, it would not have been difficult for the Lord to fill the nets in that way as well. Yet He tells Peter, "Get into the boat" — that is, into the Church.

The Lord says the same thing to us. It is not enough merely to claim that you keep My commandments; you must be within the Church. Some people say, "I keep Christ's commandments, I read the Gospel, but I do not want anything to do with the Church." As you understand, my brothers and sisters, this cannot be. Christ does not exist apart from the Church, because the Church is His Body. Of course, being outside the Church is a person's right. But to claim that one is within the Church while simultaneously fighting against it, sowing discord and division, is a very serious sin. Unfortunately, some of our brothers and sisters fall into this temptation: they fight against the Church and against the bishops and imagine that by doing so they are

carrying out God's will. Yet, my beloved, God's will is obedience to His Holy Church, and not to our own distorted reasoning.

We also see that the work of the disciples is blessed, multiplied, and made fruitful when they obey the word of the Lord. Let us not expect, brothers and sisters, that our work in the Church—whether we are clergy or laypeople—will have God's blessing and bear fruit if we refuse obedience, create disputes and divisions, cause problems, and destroy the unity and peace of the Church.

Let us, therefore, remain within the spiritual boat of the Church, my brothers and sisters, no matter how turbulent the sea of this world may become. And let us learn to trust the word of Christ more than our own reasoning and our own strength. "Nevertheless, at Your word I will let down the net," says Peter. And this obedience transforms fruitless effort into abundant fruitfulness, and disappointment into hope. Let us cast our nets with faith and obedience; Christ is the One who fills them. Amen!