My Beloved Ones,

Just as we will begin the season of Fall this Saturday, this weekend is the First Sunday of Luke. Therefore, it seems appropriate that this Sunday’s Gospel is also about beginnings; specifically, the beginning of Christ calling His Disciples to their ministry.

We are in the village of Gennesaret, where the size of the crowd makes it necessary for Christ to speak to them from a fishing boat. When Christ finishes, He turns to Simon, the owner of the boat, and suggests that Simon put down his nets. Simon is tired. He worked all night and has caught nothing, but something makes him obey...

The catch of fish is miraculous, and though Simon is a man of little education, when the nets begin to break, and the boat starts to sink, Simon’s first words to Jesus are, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8). Jesus does not leave Simon, or Simon’s partners, James, and John. Christ wished to prefigure that which He would later teach them: “…do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind… your Father knows that you need them… seek his kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well” (Luke 12:29-31). Instead of leaving, He simply tells them, “Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men” (Luke 5:11).

Christ’s words to them are so inspiring, that it is easy to forget James and John were leaving their father, Zebedee. Later in the Gospel, when we read of Christ healing Simon Peter’s mother-in-law, we know what Christ demanded when He commanded His Disciples to leave their homes and follow Him. When we speak of what it means to be a follower of Christ, we are constantly faced with the reality that we must deny ourselves. It is one thing to abandon worldly pleasures, but how many of us would be willing to abandon our homes, families, and friends, as the disciples did? Indeed, when we think of the monastics of the world, there are only a few who will be able to answer such a call.

Christ will call each of us in different ways, and as we can see from His Calling the Disciples, often when we least expect it. I pray that as we enter fall, we hold fast to our Lord’s command not to be afraid. So long as we seek His Kingdom and walk alongside His commandments in truth and love, God will continue to provide us with the comfort and strength to make each day a fruitful new beginning.

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta