

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Have you ever worked hard for something and then finally achieved it?

We feel good about that accomplishment, and we're right to feel that way. It's our security. But what if God asked us to give that up for something better?

Imagine Simon Peter in the gospel we just read.

- He was a fisherman, and his boat would have meant everything to him.
- Even though he got skunked the night before he must have been good at what he did. The gospel tells us that the boat belonged to him, so he was successful enough to buy his own boat.
- That boat represented security. That boat represented his livelihood. Every time Simon Peter looked at that boat, his heart must have swelled with contentment.

And then something changes. Jesus enters into his life and invites him to leave it all behind and follow him. The boat can't come with him.

This was a crucial moment for Simon Peter.

- He had seen the miraculous catch of fish.
- He had experienced the presence of Jesus. This was someone unlike anyone he had ever met. He's so moved that he falls to his knees and tells Jesus: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man."

But Jesus doesn't leave. He does something much more beautiful and much more challenging. He invites Simon Peter to leave everything behind and follow him.

- He's inviting Simon to share his own life.
- He's asking him: "Are you willing to leave everything behind for me? I promise you that you will experience a happiness you can't imagine. Will you take the risk?"

And Simon Peter says "Yes." He and his fishing buddies leave everything behind and follow Jesus.

- They recognized that they were leaving their boats, but they had found Jesus.
- So, Simon Peter teaches us a great lesson today: When we leave everything for Jesus, we find even more.

We may lose something of our personal security. We may lose our home. We may lose our possessions. We may lose our car. we may feel like we're losing control. but it's worth it.

Because when we leave everything and follow Jesus, we find so much more. Our hearts are set free, and Christ becomes our life.

Even though most of us can't simply get rid of all material possessions, it's always good to ask ourselves if he have more than we need.

- Are there some things that I need to give up in order to follow Christ more closely?

Maybe we have some superfluous things in our lives.

- How many cars do we really need? Do we really need a car?
- Do we need multiple watches or the latest cell phones? Do we always need the latest flat screen TV? Could we as a family decide to save that money and donate it to help the needy?
- How much clothing can I actually wear? Could I donate some of that to the poor?

- Have I turned my job into an idol? Obviously, I can't just leave it, but maybe God wants me to put some order in my life, and spend more time with my family.

Simon Peter left his boat behind.

- He left his security blanket for something better.
- He left it behind for *someone* better – Jesus Christ.

In the Mass today we're going to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

- There's a time of silence after communion. Let's use that well.
- Let's ask Jesus: "Lord, show me if there's something that's holding me back from following you more closely. And give me the strength to leave it behind to follow you."
- Again: "Lord, show me if there's something that's holding me back from following you more closely. And give me the strength to leave it behind to follow you." We must be honest and not lie to ourselves. Can I give it up for Jesus?

When we leave everything for Jesus, we receive a hundred times more. We receive the joy and the happiness and the freedom that only He can give.

"I am not sure exactly what heaven will be like, but I don't know that when we die and it comes time for God to judge us, he will NOT ask, how many good things have you done in your life? rather he will ask, how much LOVE did you put into what you did? Mother Teresa