

Gospel Eco

The vocation of caring for the Common Home



FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME FEBRUARY 6, 2022



The ecological problem is, without a doubt, the greatest challenge that we have as human beings in the 21st century. We have two ways: either we decide to change and "get out of the spiral of self-destruction in which we are submerging" (LS 163), or in the coming century human life on earth will have an expiry date. Beyond the catastrophism that we might think, the reality calls us to dialogue as humanity. The ecological

crisis is the new opportunity ["areopague"] to rethink the future we want to inherit.

With the publication in 2015 of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* [LS], on care for our Common Home (LS), we could say that the Church exhorts the world's population to love and care for the entire Creation (LS 13-15). It is in concordance with "rowing out into the deep" as Jesus says, in today's Gospel.

Gospel

Lk 5, 1-11

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 signalled 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.



REFLECTION

This Sunday's Gospel says that Jesus encourages the fishermen to "take the boat out to deep water". He invited them to take a step they were not used to. Leaving the shore and going beyond what is known demands several requirements. You have to have a spirit of trust, rather than just interest in adventure. The disciples trusted Jesus, perhaps they might have heard him preaching and acting, any way they obeyed him. As fishermen they were experts in the craft, but perhaps not in navigation on the high seas. It is the human tendency to settle for the usual and not open up to the new. Right here, Jesus, the Master, asks us not to accommodate ourselves, but to open ourselves to other frontiers, to other areopague. This is what Pope Francis intends to inculcate with the expression: "The Church on the way out", or in other expressions: "go out where life cries out".

The awareness of caring for God's Creation, our Common Home, is the new challenge for all humanity, and as believers, the ecological responsibility is part of the faith we profess (cf. LS 217). For this reason, we can say that rowing out into the deep water requires us as a Church to meet this challenge. It is a social problem and, in this sense, the social message of the Gospel must guide us to discover the truth and choose the path to follow, as well as to witness with service. Today more than ever, the Word of God cannot be proclaimed or heard if it is not accompanied by the witness of the power of the Holy Spirit, operating in each one of the believers in the service of their brothers (cf. SDC 525). "The Holy Spirit infuses the strength to announce the uniqueness of the Gospel with audacity (parrhesia), loudly and at all times and places, even against the current" (EG 259). In this sense, rowing out into the high sea also means the need for wisdom, that is, spirituality, as expressed by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*: "I want to propose to Christians some lines of ecological spirituality that are born from the convictions in our faith,

This Sunday's Gospel also presents us with the theme of vocation. Jesus called and formed a group of persons willing to collaborate with Him in the realization of the Kingdom of God, which would be a universal and all-inclusive brotherhood. His proposal was something beyond what was understood in Judaism. It was about recovering the dignity and salvation of all, including the Creation, for definitive communion with the Trinity. In this sense, Saint Ephrem of Nisibe writes that the incarnation of the Son of God is for the recovery of Paradise. The Paradise, the Garden of Eden, was the common home for all (Gn 1, 1-30).

The call to be disciples of Jesus has been repeated throughout the centuries, that is how it has come to us. We have been called as the first disciples in this caring of the Common Home. Similarly, the same proposal has been extended to us: collaborate with Jesus in the realization of the Kingdom. For this reason, in the face of socio-environmental deterioration, and echoing the words of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, we consider that: being protectors of Creation is the new and emerging dimension of the Christian vocation, it is an essential part of a virtuous existence, not it consists of something optional or a secondary aspect of the Christian experience (cf. LS 217).

In our commitment today we will think of our neighbor, our children and grandchildren, we must guarantee the future generations the protection of the Common House which we share (cf. LS 13). The rapid, excessive and unsupportive enrichment of the current generation can put the future at risk and build an impossible world for future generations.

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for the integral life you offer us every day. Like the first disciples, today Jesus calls us to the new ecclesial mission of rowing out into the deep, caring for Your Creation. Today we also want to pray that we all be aware of the importance of caring for our Common Home. Amen.

