



HOLY TRINITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



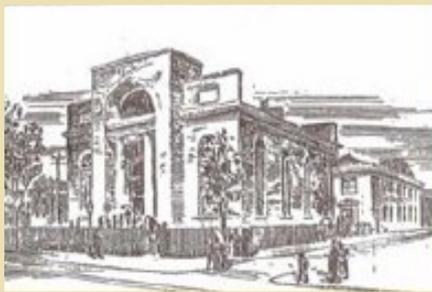
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CHURCH BULLETIN

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The 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel Reading Luke 5: 1 - 11



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At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets

were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Apostle Reading 2 Corinthians 9: 6 -11

Brethren, he point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good

work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever. He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.



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Synaxarion. Sunday September 26, 2021: Repose of Saint John the Evangelist; Holy Prince Neagoe Bessarab; Holy Righteous Ghedeon.
Friday October 1: Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos

The Miraculous Catch of Fish

The Sunday before last the Holy Church offered for our attention the para-ble about the talents. A talent is that strength which God gives to us for the fulfillment of His commandments

of love for God and neighbor. Last Sun-day showed us the application of this talent to our life. A mother had a possessed daughter. The mother rushed to Christ: "Help me!" (Mt. 15:25). But Christ was silent. Then the Apostles started to speak to Christ, pointing out this Canaanite woman. Christ answered them: But I

have come to the children. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs" (Mt. 15:26). The Canaanite woman cried: "Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table," (Mt. 15:27). At this moment her consciousness was completely filled with humility; and in answer to this most profound humility, the Lord took pity on her and said: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt" (Mt. 15:28).

And here, today's Gospel about the miraculous catch of fish shows us how that same talent (according to the Gospel's expression, used in "trade" (Mt. 25:16), which means applied to life) is manifested in absolute obedience and trust in the word of the Lord and produces the fruit of faith. But what is faith? What does the process of faith consist of? We are given the answer to this in today's Gospel (Lk. 5:1-11).

Christ was preaching on the lake of Gennesaret. Now the sermon has finished. There were two boats at the shore, and Christ had been preaching from one of them. Here He addressed the Apostle Peter and said: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets." Peter answered: "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing" (Lk. 5:4-5). And the Apostles were experienced fishermen; they knew the laws of the sea. If at night-time no fish were caught, then during the day a catch was out of the question. And Peter said this to Christ. But he added: "Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the nets" (Lk. 5:5). And they let them down. And a miracle happened. The boats were so filled with fish that they started to sink. Then the Apostle Peter fell at the feet of the Savior and said: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk. 5:8).

This is the process of faith. The Apostle knew that fish could not be caught. But he accepted the word of Christ

within himself, within his will; and this will, which by now was Christ's, he fulfilled. And what happened? A miracle?



Yes, a miracle. But the main miracle was not in the abundance of fish, although this catch was a miracle. The main miracle was the change of soul which occurred in Peter. He saw himself, he saw his essence. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Here is the process of faith: to accept in your heart the word of Christ, to fulfill it. And then to us will be revealed the thing which is most important for our salvation, for our inner life.

People say: I do not believe. What do these words mean? They mean that you are not fulfilling the teaching of Christ. Because if you would only attempt to fulfill the word of Christ, at least one commandment of Christ, then the essence of your life would be revealed to you, too. But you don't want to do this, and therefore you say: I have no faith. But how does one make an attempt? Well, the same way the Apostle Peter did. In spite of all his experience as a fisherman, he listened to Christ and let down the nets. Listen to the word of Christ. But where do we find this word? In the Gospel — that is where. If we know the Gospel and apply it to our life, then our life in Christ will be revealed to us. And His Resurrection will become for us more real than the physical world surrounding us. And He will fill our heart with an unspeakable joy, with the joy of Eternal Life; and this joy will have no end.

Only take the Gospel in your hands, only try to apply it in your life. Take everything which the Holy Church gives us. Then a miracle will happen to you, too — greater miracle than the wonderful catch. Christ Himself will be revealed to you as He was revealed to Peter. Then you too will say deep in your heart: "I am a sinful man, O Lord!" And if you are a sinner, it means that you are sick and need a physician. And if a physician, then who is the Physician of the heart? Christ alone!

O Lord, Thou seest the infirmities and the wounds of sin in our heart, which prevent us from fulfilling Thy teaching, Thy Word. Heal us and help us to start a New Life!

Archbishop Andrei Rymarenko

Fishers of Men

"From henceforth thou shalt catch men." (Luke 5:1-11)

Dear brethren,

In this passage we are carried by St. Luke to the Lake of Gennesaret. We picture two fishermen returning from their work with empty nets. As usual, there were many people gathered at the lake. The fishermen customarily took their catch and brought it into the house of Anna and Caiaphas, and to the Roman authorities, after which they sold it in order to buy bread and other necessities for their families. But as the Gospel says, on that night the fishermen were in great despair as they sat washing their nets for the next day's work.

The task of a fisherman is hard and very painful. Nevertheless, for Holy Scriptures it is a very symbolic work. In the science of theology there is a branch called *alieflike*. In order to catch fish, the fisherman must be experienced and well-prepared. The same must be said about every fisherman of logical soul. In other words, every preacher, in order to attract human souls into the net of Christ, needs to be well-prepared and experienced.

A fisherman must be patient and calm. Many times will he cast his net, and the results desired will be few and far between. The same can be said for the preacher. Many times he will preach, and oftentimes without favorable results.

Yet, he will not give up. He will continue with greater fervor. The job of a fisherman is a trying one, what with the salt and brine; the dashing waves and freezing waters; the cold wind against the warm rain.

The mission of the preacher is equally difficult. Man is very much like the sea — capricious. When a fisherman takes in a good catch, he rejoices until he begins separating the edible from the non-edible and ends up throwing most of it back into the sea. Then comes despair. The same thing happens to the preacher. He preaches in Church and captures his audience in his net, as long as they are in Church.

We have so many examples of like situations in history and our past experiences. How many people despise the grace and return the gift.

Amongst the multitude at the lake stood our Lord.

He boarded the ship of Simon, who he later surnamed Peter (Luke 5:3). Jesus asked Peter to take his ship a little further out into the lake, that all might see. Jesus transformed the boat from a ship into His pulpit, and He began to teach ... "and He sat down and taught the people out of the ship." This might very well serve as an example for us, that the Gospel of Christ, the Word of God, "is not bound" to only one place, nor is it limited to the pulpits and places of worship. But the action of preaching is designed for all places, as Paul wrote to Timothy ... "preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). To be sure, the very office in which I am sitting and receiving people is a pulpit.

The restaurant wherein I sit and eat my meal can very well serve as a pulpit. When I walk through the streets, or in the shops where people work, these too can become pulpits. Whatever I say must be guised in the edification of a sermon — a sermon that will benefit my fellow man. So many times people say to us, "What a kind man he is," "How nicely he speaks."

However, kindness in the Christian concept is quite different from any other. The real Christian is always careful about his language and is never flexible to the point that harsh words will follow or be substituted for kind words. The honest and genuine Christian never changes, no matter what threatens to damage his social behavior and contacts.

After the end of the sermon Jesus begged Peter to anchor his ship in a deeper part of the lake, and to cast his nets for one more try. Peter immediately raises the objection ... "Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing." This same pessimism afflicts many people nowadays, especially at the outset of a new task. Some familiar phrases: "It is impossible to do that. We should not have started this way."

We should not have built such a huge church, we are a small community. The bishop or the priest had no right to do that."

What a great mistake! The position of the Christian in society must be a positive one. Christianity is

positive experience, not a negation. The only area in which the Christian can afford negation is in his attitude towards sin. But for progress, he must believe positively that God is always with us. We trust in His providence, in His love, and in His paternal affection.

The Lord insists, and Peter casts his nets into the sea... "nevertheless, at Thy word I will let down the net." The net, no sooner had it submerged, began to tear ... "and when they had this done they enclosed a great multitude of fish and their nets broke." Peter is astonished. Yes Peter, but do not be surprised. Last night you toiled endlessly in pain, but without Christ. Today your nets are cast with His blessings. How would it be possible for the nets to remain empty?

This lesson is also for us. Oftentimes we cast out our nets without ever remembering Christ; not even seeking His blessings. Many of us try to use force in working with the blessing of God. Undoubtedly, our efforts are in vain, our expenditures lost, our hopes hardly ever realized. Actually, without God and Christ, we can never achieve fruitful ends.

Peter's first reaction to this marvelous thing was a realization of his unworthiness. He said to Jesus, "Lord, I am a sinner. Leave my ship, please. It is not a place for you. You are clean." No, Peter, you are wrong. The Lord came for the sinners. It is the ill afflicted that have need of a doctor, He said once, and not those that are well. Perhaps this is the strangest thing with the sermons of Jesus — the sinners become the greatest preachers.

Brethren, let us rejoice and celebrate. The sinners are becoming preachers, apostles, and fathers of the Church. "Simon, fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Dear brethren, come forth, Jesus Christ waits for you and me.

Come, He has a place for you, that you might stand up in your own particular pulpit and preach about the greatness of God. He accepts, as St. Chrysostom reiterates, the last with the same manner as the first. He rewards the first as abundantly as the last. His job is indeed easy, and His burden is light. Amen.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from September 26 to October 3, 2021

Sunday September 26 (18th Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Divine Liturgy
11:30 am - Sunday School
12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

Friday October 1— Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos:

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Divine Liturgy
11:30 am - Coffee Hour

Sunday October 3 - (19th Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Divine Liturgy
11:00 am - Sunday School
12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

