

**5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C) Homily
Saint William, Champion | February 6, 2022
Is 6:1-2a, 3-8 | 1 Cor 15:1-11 | Lk 5:1-11
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There is a recent saying that insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

For most of us here today, the story of the calling of the disciples is a familiar one. We know that Simon Peter and his brother Andrew were career fishermen. Now they were not blessed with all the modern conveniences of a sport fisherman today, with a large outboard motor to go from one good spot on the lake to another, and a fish finder to be able to track the fish. Instead, they had to row out to what they hoped was the right spot, and lower the nets into the water. Then they would raise the nets, waiting to see if they were lucky enough to catch something.

But like anyone who has gone fishing knows, sometimes the fish are biting, and sometimes they just are not. Despite our best efforts, sometimes we come back empty. And while it's not a big deal for somebody who is fishing for fun, it really is a big deal for somebody who is supposed to be making a living fishing. Luke tells us that Simon and

Andrew had been out all night and all morning, with no success. They had likely thrown out their nets into the water many times, pulling them up empty time after time. They were defeated and tired, and were done. They had gotten the message. This just wasn't a good day for fishing. It was time to cut their losses and move on. They began put their nets in order to be ready to try again tomorrow.

Suddenly a preacher borrows their boat to teach the crowd. When he finishes, he invites them to try one more time. I can picture Simon's response. This guy can't know anything about fishing... now I'll have to put everything away again. And even more, he calls them to go out to the deep water, the farthest part of the lake. This is going to take forever... But somehow, something is different... really different. And when they pull the nets back, they are full, more than ever before.

Today, our Gospel reminds us that we are called to be fishers of people. For many of us, we have those times when we feel just like Simon felt that morning; we're tired and dejected, and we have nothing to show for our efforts. We are ready to give up and call it a day.

But then Jesus calls us to put out to deep water. To go farther than we've gone before, to a place where we are at risk, but with the potential of great reward. To a place where we can't rely on our past experiences, or our own strength. To a place where the outcome isn't certain.

Where is the deep water in our lives?

Maybe it's in the attitudes we have. Maybe it's a different way of seeing the people around us. Maybe it's responding differently to the same situations we commonly face. Maybe it's being willing to let go of something that holds us back from becoming who we are called to be.

Maybe it's being willing to stretch ourselves, to put ourselves in situations where we've never been before. Maybe it's about being willing to try again where we've failed before.

Most of us prefer to live our lives from the safety of the shallow waters. We don't take risks; we know we are safe.

But life commonly puts us into situations where we find ourselves in deep water whether we want to be there or not. People become parents, children become teenagers, teenagers become young adults. That's

deep water. Maybe we get a phone call, or a letter, or even a text message. It could be someone who has been diagnosed with cancer, or someone has experienced the loss of a job. Or maybe we encounter someone who needs our help right in front of us. We may not realize it, but God's call to us is one that challenges us to go out into the deep water.

How do we respond? We can try to go back to the shallow water, or we can put out our nets, trusting in God and in those He has placed in our lives to help us. God is with us in the deep water, in spite of our failings, our faults, our unworthiness.

It is crazy to keep doing the same things over and over again. But as Simon found, putting his faith in God and going out into the deep water made all the difference.