

“Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” This is the command of Jesus to Simon Peter as our Lord essentially invites the exhausted fisherman to trust Him and take a risk even after a long night of fishing with no success. Another common translation of this command of Jesus is “Put out into the deep.”

And of course we’re told in Luke’s Gospel, “When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking.” So once Simon Peter let go of his fears and doubts and trusted in the Lord’s command, he experienced something amazing—he experienced great success. And that success cannot be defined solely within the context of the fish, but rather in Simon Peter’s decision to follow Christ more closely—to leave everything and to give his entire life to Jesus as one of His disciples.

“Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch. Put out into the deep.” Our Lord Jesus speaks these same words to each of us in the context of our lives, and more specifically in the context of our faith,

our personal relationship with Him in and through His Church. And in this command, our Savior invites us to let go of any fears and doubts we may have, any false expectations, and to trust Him. In this command, our Lord invites us to go *deeper into our faith*, to go *deeper* into our personal relationship with Him in and through His Church.

Brothers and sisters, we are not called to mediocrity, we're called to sanctity. And by virtue of our Baptism and Confirmation, we're not only called to sanctity, but to the *heights of sanctity*—the heights of holiness, which is that intimacy with Jesus that's manifested by a life of love and virtue! Many times in our life we can be satisfied with mediocrity, especially in our faith. We can become too comfortable with our dead routines that bear no fruit or our repetitive patterns of habitual sin that weigh us down and cause us to despair and lose hope. Spiritually, we can get used to living in a rut where we don't make any serious progress in growing in holiness and becoming who God created us to be. These self-made prisons of doubt and fear prevent us from experiencing deep conversion and can lead to spiritual death and destruction.

And so our Lord Jesus lovingly seeks to break through the bars of these self-made prisons in our life and He says, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch. Put out into the deep.” In other words, go deeper! Trust me! Follow me more closely! Don’t be satisfied with mediocrity! Get out of your comfort zone! Brothers and sisters, we can never go wrong in following the Lord’s commands! Never! We can never go wrong in following the words of Christ!

Once St. Peter experiences the great success of their astonishing catch, we’re told, “he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” In saying this, St. Peter is speaking from the cell of his own self-made prison of fear and doubt! St. Peter is afraid to trust Jesus and follow him more closely because of his own sinfulness! We can all fall into this trap of despair and doubt: “I’m not good enough to follow you Lord. I can’t do it! I’m not worthy of you! You will never love me because of what I’ve done in my past. You will never forgive me Lord for this sin! How can God forgive me for what I’ve done! It’s impossible to follow you Lord.” These internal lies we

tell ourselves are all variations of “Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man.”

And what does Jesus do in response to St. Peter’s words? He reassures Simon saying, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men.” Jesus lovingly breaks through Simon Peter’s self-made prison and liberates him by calling the fisherman to follow Him more closely—to leave everything else behind and give his life entirely to Christ. By His love and mercy, Jesus overcomes Simon Peter’s doubts and fears.

Brothers and sisters, the Lord wants to overcome our own fears, doubts, and despair. He wants to liberate us from our own self-made prisons so that He can lift us to the heights of holiness! And so he says to each of us today, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch. Put out into the deep.” Go deeper! Receive more!

How can we practically go deeper into the gift of our faith in our life? Maybe going deeper means I’m going to start frequenting the sacraments more! Maybe I’ll consider worshipping and receiving our Lord in the Eucharist more by going to daily mass! I seriously

encourage everyone here to seriously consider attending daily Mass. If your schedule allows or even if you can change your schedule, I would greatly encourage you to consider it. There's no greater visible gift on this earth than the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Maybe going deeper means more spiritual reading, more time for personal or family prayer— Maybe more penances and fasting, going to Confession, and Eucharistic Exposition. Maybe I need to reduce or cut certain things out of my life more, like social media, my screentime, less binge-watching on streaming.

In a few moments, we will encounter the same Lord who called Simon Peter the fisherman and liberated him from his own self-made prison. And in encountering Christ today in this Mass, He speaks those same powerful words to us in order to give us everything in Heaven: “Put out into the deep and Do not be afraid.”