

Put out into deep water. Imagine what must've went through Peter's mind when he heard Jesus say these words. Peter was exhausted from fishing all night. On top of that, he was disappointed because all his labor didn't result in a single fish. And now of all things, a preaching carpenter was telling him, an expert fisherman, to go fishing in the middle of the day. Everyone knew you don't catch fish in broad daylight, especially after a night without catching anything at all. The command must've sounded absurd. Of course, Peter protested that such an endeavor would be a waste of time and effort.

But Peter relents and obeys. He lowers his nets into deep water. Not because he understood or could figure it out. He obeys because of the One issuing the command. And it pays off. They catch so many fish that their nets begin to tear. This miraculous event marked a turning point in the relationship between Jesus and Peter. At that moment, Peter knew that Jesus was more than just a preaching carpenter. He goes from calling Jesus "Master" to calling Him "Lord".

Just like Peter, Jesus tells us to put out into deep water. But we're hesitant about the deep water because it frightens us. It signifies a place of uncertainty, challenge, risk, and the unknown. It stands in opposition to the shallows of the shoreline; which is a place of comfort, security, the familiar, the customary way of doing things. The shallows are a safe place where we can depend on our own individual skills, our own talents and virtues, without ever risking much. If we're honest with ourselves, we prefer the shallows.

But as Jesus tells us, we need not fear the deep water. He's not trying to get us to step out of our comfort zones to torture us, but because He loves us. He wants more for us. We may not understand, but it's OK, because we're not alone. He's in our boats, as He was with Peter. He's

there to rescue us. He's there to strengthen us. He'll never leave us, as He proves at every Mass in the Eucharist. The deep water is where we'll find Jesus.

In 1946, Saint Teresa was a nun with the Sisters of Loretto in Calcutta, India. She was a teacher, and very happy with her life. But Jesus was calling her to deep water. He was calling her to leave everything and follow Him in a new way. She had to leave the shallows where the security of her life and work was, and begin all over in the deep water of a mission outside her comfort zone. This wasn't easy for her. She was tempted to go back to the shallows of familiarity. But she didn't turn back. She kept following Christ. And the whole world has seen the catch Mother Teresa hauled in from the deep water.

Maybe Jesus is asking you to put out into deep water in order to strengthen your relationship with Him. You've had a thought in the back of your mind for a long time that you should pray more, or better. Or God has been nudging you to come to confession and you've been ignoring Him. Or He's been gently inviting you to study your faith more, to get to know Him better, and you've been resisting.

Maybe Jesus is asking you to put out into deep water in order to strengthen your relationship with others. There's someone you need to forgive, or ask forgiveness from. Or you need to cut off or pull back a relationship that's dragging you down. Or you need to renew your commitment to someone you've been neglecting or taking for granted.

Maybe Jesus is asking you to put out into deep water in order to strengthen your character and interior integrity. You need to leave behind a hidden habit of dishonesty or self-indulgence. Or God is asking you to discipline a particular area of your life. Or you need to leave behind mediocrity and strive again for excellence in one of your responsibilities.

The deep water is as unique as each of our lives. It's different for each of us but Jesus is calling all of us to some type of deep water. Going there can mean a change in attitude toward our family, our friends, or our coworkers. It may mean even venturing into the deep waters of our own prejudices and habitual ways of thinking. And making changes.

The story is told of a great circus performer by the name of Blondin who stretched a long steel cable across Niagara Falls. During high winds and without a safety net, he walked, ran, and even danced across the tightrope to the amazement and delight of the large crowd of people who watched. He even took a wheelbarrow full of bricks and pushed it effortlessly across the cable, from one side to the other. Blondin then turned to the crowd and asked, "Now, how many of you believe that I could push a man across the wire in the wheelbarrow?" The vote was unanimous. Everyone cheered and held their hand high. They all believed he could do it. Then Blondin asked, "Would one of you please volunteer to be that man?" As quickly as the hands went up, they went back down. Not a single person would volunteer to ride in the wheelbarrow and to trust his life to Blondin.

All of here today believe in Jesus Christ. That's why we came to Mass, but how much have we put that faith into practice? Often we're content to have Jesus sit in our boat, to hear His teaching, and feel the comfort of His presence. But when He asks something of us, when He pushes us out of our comfort zone, we resist. That's why we get stuck in the shallows with empty nets. Jesus has more to give us. He wants to fill our nets, as He filled Peter's. He just needs us to trust Him a little bit more, to climb into His wheelbarrow, to put out into deep water.

Saint Peter teaches us a great lesson today. When we leave everything for Jesus to put into the deep water of life, we find even more. Peter's boat would've meant everything to him. His boat represented security. His boat represented his livelihood. His boat represented

contentment. Jesus entered his life and invited Peter to leave it all behind and follow Him. The boat couldn't come with him. So Peter left it all right there on the shoreline and followed Jesus where He was leading him.

When we leave everything for Jesus and follow Him, we receive a hundred times more. We may lose something of our personal security. We may feel like we're losing control, but it's worth it. We receive the joy and happiness and the freedom that only He can give.

Brothers and sisters, we can respond to the words of the Gospel with confidence, knowing that Jesus has passed through the waters of life, and even the deep waters of death, transforming them for us. There's still uncertainty in the deep water but we can experience it in a new way, since He went there ahead of us. Are you willing to listen to Jesus' command and put out into deep water in your life? Will you take the risk and leave everything behind to follow Jesus where He is leading you?"