

SEPTEMBER 5 FATHER ROSHAN LOY D'SOUZA

Do you believe that God intervenes directly in our lives?

Why am I here? Is there more? Does God exist? These questions nag at us relentlessly throughout our lives. But the answers are elusive, always just out of reach. Today we are fact-driven people: we need evidence before we form opinions and often dismiss events that can't be logically explained. Yet we desperately want the security that comes with having a certain future. The search for that security has divided people into two camps: those who look for solace in organized religion and its promise of an afterlife, and those who consider themselves spiritual but not religious — they believe their souls are going somewhere, but they're not sure exactly where. Regardless of what camp you're in, we all want the same thing. We want confirmation that what we believe is true. We want proof of modern-day encounters with the Divine.

Today's gospel tells us, what happens when God intervenes. Simon Peter is frustrated, tired, and weary. A night of fishing has proven very unfruitful. He's caught absolutely nothing. In the morning, Jesus finds Peter washing his nets. He tells him to launch the boat and let down the nets. Oh great... a carpenter telling a professional fisherman how to fish. Peter initially objects, but finally concedes.

Jesus is able to do in seconds what Peter was not able to accomplish all night! The miraculous catch of fish produces in Peter a contrite spirit as he marvels at the power of Jesus. The catch is so amazing that the nets are breaking and the boats are sinking. In other words, the point is: this is an utterly unprecedented catch of fish in a location that seemed hopelessly unproductive the night before. And it was caught at the powerful and authoritative word of Jesus.

This power is in the Word of Christ, drawing people to faith, drawing fish into a net. How does Peter respond to the miraculous catch of fish? “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.” Peter sinks to his knees in awe before this mysterious figure: If you only knew to whom you were speaking! My spirit is dull and my heart is weary. Depart from me!”

My brothers and sisters, Ask the Lord to give you a growing awareness of Gods presence as well as keener sense of the depth of your need of His pardon. What does Jesus say to Peter and to all his disciples at the end: “Surely, I am with you always even to the end of the age.”

How is it that Jesus would not depart from Peter? One day Jesus would die for Peter’s sins of betrayal, pride & ambition. The same power that prompts Peter to fall at Jesus’ knees in contrition and humble worship now lifts him into God’s service. It is interesting in this story that Jesus gets into the boat to call Peter out of the boat!

What does Jesus ask Peter to do? What is He asking us to do?

‘Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men. Several of Jesus’s disciples were fishermen. They understood the water. They understood the terrain. They understood what it took to catch fish. But, did they know how to catch men? To catch men with the gospel? Jesus showed them how. As fishermen, they thought they had seen it all. There was more to learn from Jesus because *God uses the most ordinary people to do the most extraordinary things!* He uses regular folks! Being a fisherman is not glamorous. It’s downright dirty, ugly and smelly. It takes hard work, drive and patience to wait for fish to bite. It takes that same hard work, patience, and drive to be fishers of men. And fishers of men are those who take the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ and share it with others.

Peter and James and John respond with hearts overflowing with the value of knowing Jesus: “When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.”

This is what it means to follow Jesus: he is more valuable to us than everything. Ask the Lord to show you what it is that you value more than Jesus. Is He more valuable to you than your money? Your career? Prestige? Pleasure? For sure there is something that we must bring and lay down at the feet of Jesus.

The Lord doesn't always bring our frustration to an end after one year, but if you have something in your life that you wish weren't there, that has caused you a measure of frustration, I can guarantee you this: The Lord is pursuing you in order to show you four things: How great is his power, how great is your need of His pardon, how vital it is to accept His purpose, and how vital it is to value him above all else.