

The Keys

Church of St. Peter the Apostle

Anglican Catholic Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic States

www.dmas-acc.org



Canon Peter Geromel, OHI, DMin - Rector

July 2023

<https://stpetersacc.org>

The Curate's Corner – Fr. Gregory Seeley

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

This is a famous story, the calling of Jesus' first disciples; Peter, Andrew, James and John. This story is interesting for a few reasons:

First, this is his first miracle. The narration of the miracle of the wedding at Cana mentions that "his disciples were there". Well, this is the scene when he calls his first disciples, so Cana is necessarily after this. This miracle is also interesting because of the manner in which it happens. Peter, Andrew, James, and John are professional fishermen; they know how to fish. They had just gone out, at night, when the fish were more active and cast their nets, and took nothing. Then Jesus comes along and asks them to do it again.

Imagine if you were a teacher and you had just finished explaining how to do a math problem, and you got blank stares; then someone comes into the classroom and says, "say that again". Or you're a language teacher and you explain a verb tense or language technique and you got blank stares, and then someone comes in and tells you to explain it again, the same way. Or imagine that you are a doctor, and you just operated on someone to fix an issue, and the surgery was unsuccessful; and then someone comes into the post-op room and says: do that again, the same surgery that you just finished, the same way again. Or imagine that you are working on a computer trying to get something to work, and it won't. Then someone tells you to try the exact same thing again, just like you just did.

The request seems weird, even insulting. In fact, it probably would have been insulting had anyone been around to witness it; but it was done out in the deep when the only ones to witness it were the four fishermen. Jesus asks them to do something that really doesn't make any sense: but they do it out of faith (and perhaps curiosity), because he asked. This is the nature of apostleship sometimes. People's hearts are hardened by sin, and they aren't listening. Then something happens to them, and God's grace can get in, and then those same words, or that same exact act of charity does the trick. It's because God did something, not because we did. Sometimes our willingness to do something that might not make sense, and which has not worked previously, might be just what is needed.

I once knew a priest who, when someone would do something wrong to him, would bless that person: either in person, or even privately. I thought that was weird, someone does something mean or rude to you, and you bless them? I asked him why he blessed them, and he said: because not all blessings are good. You see, sometimes what people need is to see something bad, in order to be good. Or, they need to have something happen to them which shakes them out of their selfish stupor, in order to realize that they need to believe. An event happens in their life which makes them turn toward God. This might be a personal tragedy, an episode with addiction where they realize they are out of control, or even a close scrape with death or damage. This event makes them come to church. They are humbled by what happened and need to start thinking about their soul. This is called a blessing, even though what happened looks manifestly evil, we say that God has blessed them to make them come back to church: so no, not all blessings are good - make sure to bless your enemies.

Thus, you might say that God blessed the fishermen with a bad night's fishing, because if they had had a good night's fishing, they almost certainly would not have done what Jesus had asked: the bad night's fishing was a blessing, even though it was a bad thing that happened. God used this event to bring forth an even greater good. God sometimes works like that, using difficulties to bring forth good fruit. So never be too angry at misfortune, just think of poor Peter, Andrew, James, and John. They spent all night out fishing and caught nothing. This goes to what St. Peter is telling us today in the Epistle: Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. God works in mysterious ways, and we should always remember that we cannot see the whole story; often there are elements to any situation that we cannot see. If we bless, then God can work more effectively. If we forgive, especially little faults, then God can.

Now let me state that I am not talking about injustice here. If you are the victim of injustice, then seek justice; I am talking about a slight. People whose hearts are hardened by sin, you can often tell them because they look unhappy, they often seem to have a chip on their shoulder, they look over worked. The world weighs heavily upon their souls. These are the types who can take their half out of the middle, can commit petty injustices, can be rude or even a little mean. They are captives of sin,

and only God can help, and he can help even faster if you bless this person rather than curse them, which is what you are going to be tempted to do.

St. Paul was like this. He was a persecutor of the church, and it got him popularity and notoriety. He had no reason to quit; except that God intervened. God's intervention was made easier by St. Stephen's blessing him when Saul was involved in his martyrdom. We will probably never have to do anything that dramatic, but you can see the example. The cost of discipleship is working with a God of mystery. He may ask you to do something that you have already done, a million times before. He may ask you to do something that has never worked before. But if you can trust him, have faith that he can move both hearts and mountains (and mountains are far easier to move than hearts), then there's no telling what God can accomplish through you.

Once the miracle happened Peter immediately recognized that Jesus was a holy man. He realized that God had intervened in his life, and that he needed to respond. Peter recognized the grace of God and was immediately grateful. Another aspect of this miracle is that when the great drought of fishes was taken, the net began to break, and another boat was needed. When God gives grace you can expect to see an abundance, God does not give by half measures. So don't be afraid to do the same act of charity many times, don't be afraid to pray the same prayer many times. Sometimes it will be that one time when we might not expect it that we will see the fruit of our labor.

News and Information

Vestry meeting - July 12th, 7:30 PM, mass preceding at 7 PM.

St. James the Apostle, transferred to Thursday, July 27th, at Noon.

JULY, 2023						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
[30] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE TRINITY VIII	[31]	LEGEND: HC - Holy Communion; FHE – Festal Holy Eucharist; HE - Holy Eucharist; SS – Sunday School; PG - Prayer Group; EP – Evening Prayer; MP – Morning Prayer; P&HU – Prayers and Holy Unction				[1] 5:00 p.m. HC
[2] 8:00 a.m. MP 10:00 a.m. MP TRINITY IV		[4]	[5]	[6] 12 noon HC	[7]	[8] 5:00 p.m. HC
[9] 8:00 a.m. MP 10:00 a.m. MP TRINITY V	[10]	[11]	[12] 7:00 p.m. HC 7:30 p.m. Vestry	[13] 12 noon HC	[14]	[15] 5:00 p.m. HC
[16] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE TRINITY VI	[17]	[18]	[19]	[20] 12 noon HC	[21]	[22] 5:00 p.m. HC
[23] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE TRINITY VII	[24]	[25]	[26]	[27] 12 noon HC	[28]	[29] 5:00 p.m. HC

IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

If you cannot fulfill your assigned duty because of an urgent reason, PLEASE SECURE A REPLACEMENT.

	July 2	July 9	July 16	July 23	July 30
Coffee Hour	V. Williams	C. DeRosset	L. Olver	B. Von Claparede	M. Slayton
Sat. Epistoler 5 p.m.	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield
Epistoler 8 a.m.	D. Drysdale	C. Von Claparede	G. Mauney	D. Drysdale	C. Von Claparede
Epistoler 10 a.m.	T. Paisley	T. Paisley	P. Williams	G. Terrell	P. Williams

Altar servers and ushers will be assigned as available before each service.

2023 Vestry (term end): Allen Butterfield ('25), Dan Drysdale ('23), Lisa Olver ('24),
Ted Paisley ('24), Mike Slayton ('25), Phil Williams ('23)