

Parish Newsletter

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME | 10 FEBRUARY 2019
CYCLE C | ISSUE 11

It's a time of transition in parishes, with increasing numbers of parishes no longer having a resident priest. Words and analysis are plentiful, silver bullet solutions abide (married/female priesthood, imported clergy etc.), but concrete solutions are in short supply. Dioceses engage in the listening process, organising synods and assemblies and maximising resources by clustering arrangements. All very good but the result can be simply shared perplexity as to how to support faith in turbulent times.

Many will call for increased participation on the part of parishioners and while some priests report that people are generally well disposed to help, they are slow to take over the wheel with strong instances of 'Whatever you think yourself, Father,' being the response to a query on what steps need to be taken. 'Unloading the wagons' is a key concept in a book which I enjoyed reading: *The Lost Art of Walking on Water*. That is what I was thinking about in relation to today's Gospel, which has the early followers of Jesus being called from working on water to becoming 'fishers of men' on land. They knew the whims of the sea and how to face the elements. Today's Gospel



CALL AND RESPONSE

passage has empty nets made full by the Lord and brought ashore.

'Unloading the wagons' represents the idea that priests are called to lead the 'pastoral wagon' and not get overly involved in the concrete, non-pastoral, tasks of increasing administrative duties, however good and important they may be.

There is much to be done in training people for unknown, future roles in an undoubtedly smaller Irish Church. It's good at these times to remember that, as today's Gospel shows us, God doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the called.

They tell a story of Jesus returning to Heaven, on his Ascension. The welcome is great and when all settles down Gabriel, who announced it all, was having a quiet word with Jesus. 'Master, you must have suffered terribly for men down there.' 'I did,' he said. 'And,' continued Gabriel, 'Do they know all about how you loved them and what you did for them?' 'Oh, no,'

said Jesus, 'not yet. Right now only a handful of people in Palestine know.' Gabriel was perplexed. 'Then what have you done to let everyone know about your love for them?' Jesus said, 'I've asked Peter, James, John, and a few more friends to tell other people about me. Those who are told will, in turn, tell still other people, and so my story will spread.' Gabriel frowned (knowing how frail and weak humanity is after all!). 'But suppose they fail, forget or fall – what's the Plan B?' Jesus answered, 'I have no other plans. I'm counting on them.' Twenty centuries later, that sentiment of Jesus hasn't changed. ■

– Tom Cox

THIS WEEK (11-17 FEBRUARY)

- 11 **Mon** Our Lady of Lourdes; St Gobnait, abbess
- 12 **Tue** St Damian
- 13 **Wed** St Catherine of Ricci
- 14 **Thur** Sts Cyril and Methodius, patrons of Europe
- 15 **Fri** St Sigfrid of Vaxjo
- 16 **Sat** St Onesimus, bishop and martyr
- 17 **Sun** SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS



Jeremiah 17:5-8
Psalm 1:1-4,6
1 Corinthians 15:12,16-20
Luke 6:17,20-26

Reflection

In what ways has the Lord called you to discipleship?

Lesson

Today's Gospel shows us – God doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the called.

Prayer

Lord, you send your word as bait to your people, and you raise up men and women who preach your good news. Give success to all their fishing endeavours.