**THEME**: FISHERS OF SOULS

**READINGS**: Isaiah 6: 1-8/ 1 Cor. 15: 1-11/ Luke 5: 1-11

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

“Jesus said to Simon [Peter], ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will become a **fisher of men.**’ Then, bringing their boats back to land they left everything and followed him” (Lk. 5:10-11). The urgency with which the fisherman Simon Peter and his colleagues abandoned everything to follow Jesus shows their passion for the new business the Lord was engaging them for: ***to fish for souls***. Beloved, how passionate are we in fishing souls for Christ? In our daily conversations with our family members, friends, colleagues, etc. does the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ feature? Or has it become a taboo-topic?

Beloved the task to fish souls for Christ is for all of us and not for just the apostles, their successors (bishops) and their immediate collaborators (priests, deacons, religious, catechists). If we are not passionate enough to reach out into the “deep seas” of our community or town to fish souls for Christ, let us, at least, take up the ***“a soul per year” project***. That is, let us aim at winning, at least, a soul for Christ every year.

If we are often excited about sharing the latest information or website with family and friends, then let us be passionate about sharing the Good News – the best news mankind will ever have – with them! If we enjoy sending to them messages and pictures through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and e-mails, then, let us think about how best we can use the same media to deliver the Good News to them.

If we are concerned about the future good standard of living of our family and friends, then we should be concerned also about the future of their souls – the salvation of their souls. How can we be so concerned about the brief future of 50, 60 …100 years of earthly life, and be less concerned about the everlasting “standard of living” beyond the grave?

If we are already in the good business of fishing souls for Christ, then let us keep it up or do more. However, if we began the fishing for souls but have abandoned our boats, let us go back to it. Furthermore, if we are yet to start, then let us begin today. For those of us who want to re-start or begin, we can learn from the actual fishing enterprise.

FISHING NET: there is the fishing net. Today we have the inter-net by which we gather information. Similarly to fish for souls, we need a ***soul-net*** by which souls can be gathered for Christ. Our **good lifestyle** is a **soul-net** woven with the solid **thread, which is the Word of God.** By a good lifestyle, therefore, one can gradually catch people for Christ.

THE BAIT: The bait is used to attract fish into a trap/net. The miracles that accompanied the ministry of the apostles were like bait for fishing souls. We may not have the gift of miracles, but there are other types of bait we can use. We can use kindness, charity, etc. as bait to attract people indirectly to Christ. After a while, then, we can share the Word of God; and later encourage them to attend Mass or some other religious programmes with us.

As we celebrate the “Year of Mercy”, we are reminded of the Lord’s ever opened arms to welcome souls and pardon them. But then, he wants us to gather souls into his ever merciful arms. I, therefore, pray that the Spirit of the Lord will stir in us a deep love for fishing souls. Amen.