

[Intro to Mass: This weekend, we join over the over 1.3 BILLION Catholics in the world in celebrating the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life. This celebration was Instituted by Saint John Paul II in 1997. Parishes are invited to pray for all those who have accepted the vocation to consecrated life, for all religious sisters, brothers, and priests, and to pray for MORE men and women to accept this beautiful vocation.]

"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." A missionary named Jim Elliot wrote this in his journal. He was one of the five American Missionaries who were killed in 1956 seeking to bring the Gospel to the Auca, an indigenous people in Ecuador. "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

In the first reading, Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" and he replies, "Here I am, send me!" Isaiah, and all the other prophets, give up what they cannot keep, their personal plans for their lives, etc., in order to gain what they cannot lose, God Himself.

In the Gospel, Jesus commands Simon Peter to "put out into the deep lower your nets for a catch." Peter says, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." Some of the fisherman may have been thinking, doesn't Jesus realize that fishing is only done at night? That it's crazy to think they'd catch anything in the daylight? That fishing in deep water was pointless, since the best place to fish was by the shore where the fish had plants to eat?

And then, BOOM- the nets fill up so much that they are TEARING! Season 1 of the Chosen Series captures this scene so beautifully; the nets become so heavy that they pull the boat lopsided. The whole time, you see Jesus watching them and smiling, and I LOVE how He quickly looks up at His Heavenly Father, probably saying a quick thank you! I posted a video of this scene on our parish facebook page for you to check out later.

When Peter sees this miracle, he suddenly feels unworthy to be in the presence of this man, this man who has power to control nature, and says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Reminds us of the first reading where Isaiah says to God, "I am a man of unclean lips, yet my eyes have seen... the LORD of hosts!"

Does Jesus depart from Peter? No! He says, "DO NOT BE AFRAID, from now

on you will be catching men"! Jesus is recruiting Peter to join Him in His mission! This whole miraculous catch of fish is a prophecy, a sign, pointing to the mission that Jesus is just beginning, the greatest fishing expedition of all time: catching souls, pulling them out of the kingdom of darkness and into the Kingdom of God!

Peter, James, and John all follow Jesus and join Him in His fishing expedition. They leave the huge catch of fish, James and John leave their father, they leave behind their plans. They have all become convinced by Jesus that, **"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."**

At our baptism, Jesus recruited us for His fishing expedition. He commands us also to put out into the deep waters, and to go fishing for souls. He continues to send us to go fishing for souls through the words of His representatives, the popes. He continues to send us to fish for souls at every Mass. That's why every Mass ends with "GO!" GO IN PEACE! That means, GO FISHING! In fact, the word Mass means "sent" in Latin!

To put out into the deep, to GO fishing for souls, we have to give up what we cannot keep, to gain what we cannot lose. We have to give up our personal plans for HIS plans, give up our favorite sins for HIS freedom, give up our entire lives, to gain what we cannot lose, Heaven in our hearts, Heaven in the next life, and God Himself.

Every vocation, whether marriage, priesthood, or consecrated life, is a way to go fishing for souls. Today is World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life. What is consecrated life? It is a calling from Jesus to follow Him with TOTAL dedication, by imitating Him more closely in a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Examples of this vocation are sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who live a life of service out in the world; or nuns and monks, who live a life of prayer in a convent or monastery.

In Pope's Homily for the World Day for Consecrated Life, He said, "the world often sees [consecrated life] as "a waste", a relic of the past, something useless." He goes on to help us see that it is NOT a waste or something useless. He says he has seen "older consecrated men and women whose eyes are bright, who continue to smile and in this way to give hope to the young. Let us think of all those times when we encountered such persons, and bless God for this. For their eyes are full of hope and openness to the future."

How about YOU, have you ever encountered such persons? A sister or a brother, who smiled a lot, whose eyes were full of hope and openness to the future? I have. I was taught by Benedictine sisters in 7th Grade in Ann Arbor. They were hopeful and loving, but also firm in a good way. I remember kneeling on the floor at Mass, and fidgeting because it was uncomfortable, and Sister Patricia telling me, "Quit fidgeting. I'm seventy years old, and I'm not fidgeting!" When I was pastor of Nativity of the Lord parish in Alma, I got to know the RSM's, the Religious Sisters of Mercy, and they definitely fit the bill of smiling sisters whose eyes are full of hope.

I found a youtube video with stories from lots of members of religious orders including the Norbertine Monks and the Felician Sisters. Here are a few comments, I'll put more in the bulletin for next week:

- A young sister said, "I've been able to grow not only in who I am but in the things that I enjoy, because they become more than entertainment or just things to do, they become meaningful, they have purpose, and they have gone back to God in a way that says, 'here I am, here's what I have to offer', and God says, 'I'll share that with the world'"
- An older retired brother said, "My life was filled with... care that you would want in family life, which is what community life is about"
- One sister said, "At the end of my sophomore year, a classmate said, 'I think I'm going to be a sister!' I said, "You're crazy! That's the last thing I'd ever be"... and here I am!"

What do all of these men and women have in common? God convinced them that, **"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."**

I would ask each of us to do three things this week:

1. Pray every day this week for vocations from our parish and diocese to consecrated life. It is likely that God is calling at least one of the young women or young men from our parish to this vocation!
2. Look for a chance to ask a young woman, "Ever thought of becoming a religious sister?" or ask a young man, "Ever thought of becoming a religious brother or a missionary?" and then... tell them a story of how a sister or a brother helped you.
3. Send a thank you card to a sister or a brother you know. If you don't know any, consider sending a card to one of the religious orders I listed in the bulletin,

thanking all of them for their service.

ANNOUNCE

Our beloved parish secretary, Sandy Peplinski, has been undergoing non-traditional treatments for her cancer which insurance does not cover. She and her husband Mike will later be returning to Mexico for more treatments, and they humbly request the financial support of their parish family. If you wish to donate, please place your donation in the box by the church entrance, or place it in an envelope marked "Attention: Sandy" and drop in the collection basket, or mail to her home address: 4599 BC-Forestville Rd, Cass City, MI, 48726. At the very least, consider placing a card or note in the box letting her know you're praying for her. Thank you.

Our Christ's Mission Appeal is slowly moving towards our target. We are at about \$34000 towards our goal of \$52000. Please pray about giving an additional gift this year. Keep in mind that our diocese has not raised its annual operating budget for many years.

Invite Haili Gusa