

A Bible Bullet (aimed at the heart)

Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C
Isaiah 6:1-8; 1Cor 15: 1-11; Luke 5:1-11

This week's reading in Luke impressed itself upon my memory years ago when I studied scripture at St. Bonaventure Church. Each week the direct translation from the Greek to English was read. Luke's version of this story as translated from the Greek reveals what is already known about Luke as a gospel writer. Luke was a wonderful storyteller!

Routinely, various translations of the Bible and an assortment of written commentaries were investigated. The week that we studied this particular selection, we noticed that the direct translation from the Greek sets Luke's story apart from the same story found in Matthew and Mark. Luke embellished many of the events with detail that makes them more fascinating. We found that Matthew and Mark's portrayal of Jesus' invitation translates directly as follows:

Matt 4:19 - "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men."

Mark 1:17 - "Come after me and I will make you to become fishers of men."

When the story in Luke is translated directly from the Greek, the following results:

Luke 5:10 - "Fear not; from now on you will be taking men alive."

This may at first seem a trivial difference, but when put in the context of the total selection, the gravity of the invitation becomes apparent along with the seduction of the offer. Matthew and Mark continue the story by telling the reader that the men left their nets and followed Jesus. Luke, on the other hand, tells us that **they left all things behind** and followed him.

Luke wants us to know that to follow meant more than a change of occupation, more than leaving fishing nets behind. It would mean leaving **everything** behind and putting the Lord's work above all else. What would make such an offer attractive? They would be taking men alive! Alive with what? **Alive with the Spirit!** For fishermen, a boat filled with dead fish is as good as it gets. Jesus offers them men **alive!** Luke knows the prospect of these major changes in lifestyle would be frightening, so he begins with Jesus saying, "Fear not!"

When our faith is "caught" by someone who seeks to know the meaning of life, it is the living aspect of our faith that does the luring. The one who is caught finds himself alive in the Spirit, for the Spirit of the Risen Christ is the subject and object of the seduction.