



St. Thomas the Apostle Newsletter
“Faith, Seeking Understanding”
June 19, 2020 (Sacred Heart of Jesus)

What if we lived in an area with no grocery stores? A remote area, where all we could do is catch fish in order to eat and live. What would we do? We’d go out fishing every day, maybe twice or even three times in a day. Even if we had never fished before, we’d find any kind of line or net we could get our hands on, and fish.

Every day we would get up and put that line or net into the water. Even if we went for long stretches of days without catching a fish, we’d still get up each day; go down to the water and fish. We wouldn’t give up, because our life would depend on catching fish to live!

Jesus used fishing analogies with His Apostles for a reason. Yes, four of them were fisherman, but also because they all knew their dependency upon catching fish in order to eat and live. Fish were a staple to the Jewish diet and fishing was a way of life for many Galileans.

As Christians, we need to have this kind of dependency upon fishing...

Not about going down to the local lake each day to catch our dinner, but an urgency to go out every day and be “fishers of men.” (St. Mark 1:17, 18). We need to drop our line or our net into the waters of this world each day in order to catch souls.

Like fishing for actual fish, we won’t catch something every day. We may go through long periods without catching anything at all. Even so, we cannot take a day off from this vital kind of fishing. Our Christian lives and the life of our parish depend on us doing this daily fishing.

What does a day of fishing for souls look like? How do we put our line or net into the water? Simply by taking our eyes off our self, becoming aware of people and situations around us and then acting as the Holy Spirit directs us. Sometimes it may be words of comfort that need to be said (2 Corinthians 1:3-6) or an answer that needs to be given (see 2 Corinthians 1:3-6 and 1Peter 3:15). Sometimes it may be action we need to take (St. Luke 10:25-37).

Ultimately, fishing for men (for the conversion of their souls), means being available to serve in whatever way we can. It does not take any special equipment or training. All it takes is a willing spirit and a love for the brethren.

1 John 3:14-18 states “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death...But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” St. John exhorts us to put our actions where our mouth is.

If we say we love others, then let us love them with our willingness to serve them. Who, where or when? I can’t say. The Holy Spirit decides that for each of us. But every day we must get up, go down to the “lake” and put our line or our net into the water to see what the Lord will allow us to catch that day.

Fr. Paul

Fr. Paul is with Cyndi in Ohio visiting family this week. He is available by phone or text and email. He will be back in Georgia on Saturday, June 27.

Fr. Deacon Richard Hitchcock will officiate a “Deacon’s Mass” and preach this Sunday, June 21 (Trinity 2). The Sacrament will be administered in both forms.

Happy Father’s Day to all the fathers of the parish!

This newsletter, the manuscript of Fr. Paul’s sermons and his weekly Pastoral Musing are all posted on the parish website www.stthomasapa.org. Also, each week the audio (and occasionally video) of the Sunday sermon is posted on the parish Facebook page and YouTube channel. Please “like” and “subscribe” and send them to those you know who may be interested.

Please return your completed Parish Questionnaire and Contact Information sheets by June 28. Thank you.

Wisdom from the Church Fathers:

“If then we too always see God with our mind, if we always think in remembrance of Him, all things will appear endurable to us, all things tolerable; we shall bear them all easily, we shall be above them all. For if a person seeing one whom he loves, or rather, remembering him is roused in spirit, and elevated in thought, and bears all things easily, while he delights in the remembrance; one who has in mind Him who has vouchsafed to love us in deed, and remembers Him, when will he either feel anything painful, or dread anything fearful or dangerous? When will he be of cowardly spirit? Never.

For all things appear to us difficult, because we do not have the remembrance of God as we ought; because we do not carry Him about always in our thoughts. For surely He might justly say to us, ‘You have forgotten Me, I also will forget you.’ And so the evil becomes twofold, both that we forget Him and He us. For these two things are involved in each other, yet are two. For great is the effect of God's remembrance, and great also of His being remembered by us. The result of the one is that we choose good things; of the other that we accomplish them, and bring them to their end.”

-St. John Chrysostom (Late 4th, early 5th century) Bishop and Doctor, Homily 26 on Hebrews.

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