

FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Gospel: Saint Luke 5: 1-11

That we always succeed in what we do through obedience

57.1 First Point

It frequently happens that what we attempt does not succeed as we had expected, because we undertook it on our own initiative, and because we follow no other rule and no other guide than what our own spirit is able to propose. This is what today's Gospel gives us to understand in the person of Saint Peter. He told Jesus Christ that he had labored all night without catching a single fish;³⁶⁰ the reason for this was that he had acted entirely on his own.

So too, it may sometimes happen that you believe you are doing good, and yet do none at all for yourself or for others, because in what you undertake you have no other guide, no other leader, than your own spirit. When we act this way we really are laboring in the darkness of night, because often enough our spirit merely leads us astray, for the light that is in it is most of the time only darkness.³⁶¹ Follow a more reliable guide, then, if you do not want to go astray and render all your work useless.

57.2 Second Point

Saint Peter had not succeeded in his work when he acted on his own, but as soon as Jesus Christ commanded him to throw the net and pointed out the place he ought to throw it, Peter showed such great submission to what the Savior had just told him, that he and his companions caught such a great quantity of fish that the net was about to tear.³⁶²

There you see the result of obedience. It draws down God's blessing so well on what we do that by this means we obtain whatever we desire; we acquire great facility for doing good and touching hearts when we have the happiness of working for the salvation of souls and do so through simple obedience.

If you fall into many defects, if you do not achieve as much good as you could in your work, blame this on the fact that often you are not sufficiently regular, and you do not guide yourself enough by obedience. Compare what you do under the motive of obedience with what you do of your own accord, and consider the former as God's work and the latter as human work.

57.3 Third Point

Persons who live in community have this advantage over seculars, that they can say to Jesus Christ every day, with Saint Peter, Lord, it is at your word I am going to let down the net.³⁶³ At your word I am going to do this action, and this is what makes me feel confident that you will bless it and will be pleased with it.

Indeed, it is enough for an action to be performed through obedience for it to please God, when it is accomplished with such simplicity that you have in view only to obey. From this it sometimes happens through a special guidance of God that an act which was bad in itself becomes good when done through simple obedience.

Since obedience procures such a great advantage, let it be inseparable from all your actions. and be what makes them worthy of God, and puts you in a position to do good for the souls whom you should lead to God and educate as Christians.

355 Lk 11:3

356 1 Cor 4:1; 3:9

357 Lk 15:4

358 Mt 18:14

359 1 Cor 3:5

360 Lk 5:5

361 Mt 6:23

362 Lk 5:6

363 Lk 5:5