



## The Holy See

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POPE FRANCIS *ANGELUS* *Saint Peter's Square*

*Sunday, 10 February 2019* [\[Multimedia\]](#)

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*Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!*

In today's Gospel passage, Luke's narrative (cf. Lk 5:1-11) offers us the call of Saint Peter. His name — as we know — was Simon, and he was a fisherman. On the shore of the Lake of Galilee, Jesus sees him as he is arranging his nets, along with other fishermen. He finds him exhausted and discouraged, because that night they had caught nothing. And Jesus surprises him with an unexpected gesture: He gets into his boat and asks him to put out a short distance from the land because He wants to speak to the people from there — there were many people. So Jesus sits down in Simon's boat and teaches the crowd gathered along the shore. But His words reopen even Simon's heart to trust. Then, with another surprising 'move', Jesus says to him: "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch" (v. 4).

Simon responds with an objection: "Master, we have toiled all night and took nothing!". And, as an expert fisherman, he could have added: 'If we didn't catch anything during the night, we aren't going to catch anything during the day'. However, inspired by Jesus' presence and enlightened by His Word, he says: "But at your word I will let down the nets" (v. 5). It is the response of faith, which we too are called to give; it is the attitude of willingness that the Lord asks of all his disciples, especially those who are tasked with responsibilities in the Church. And Peter's trustful obedience creates a prodigious result: "when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish" (v. 6).

It is a miraculous catch, a sign of the power of Jesus' word: when we place ourselves generously in his service, he accomplishes great things in us. This is what he does in each of us: he asks us to welcome him on the boat of our life, in order to set out anew with him and to sail a new sea, one which proves to be full of surprises. His call to go out into the open sea of the humanity of our time, in order to be witnesses to goodness and mercy, gives new meaning to our existence, which is often at risk of collapsing upon itself. At times we may be surprised and uncertain before the call that the divine Master addresses to us, and we may be tempted to reject it due to our inadequacy.

Peter too, after this incredible catch, said to Jesus: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (v. 8). This humble prayer is beautiful: ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord’. But he says it on his knees before the One whom by this point he recognizes as ‘Lord’. And Jesus encourages him by saying: “Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men” (v. 10); because God — if we trust in Him — frees us from our sin and opens a new horizon before us: to cooperate in his mission.

The greatest miracle that Jesus accomplished for Simon and the other tired and discouraged fishermen is not so much the net full of fish, as having helped them not to fall victim to disappointment and discouragement in the face of failure. He prepared them to become proclaimers of and witnesses to his word and the Kingdom of God. And the disciples’ response was immediate and unreserved: “when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him” (v. 11). May the Blessed Virgin, model of prompt adherence to God’s will, help us to feel the allure of the Lord’s call, and make us willing to cooperate with him to spread his word of salvation everywhere.

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***After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:***

Dear brothers and sisters, two days ago, on the liturgical memorial of Saint Josephine Bakhita, the fifth ‘International Day [of Prayer and Awareness] Against Human Trafficking’ was observed. This year’s motto is ‘Together against trafficking’ [*people in the Square applaud*] — One more time! [*applause*] ‘Together against trafficking!’. Do not forget this. It is a call to join forces to overcome this challenge. I thank all those who fight on this front, in particular many women religious. I appeal in particular to governments, that they may confront with determination the causes of this scourge and that the victims may be protected. However, we all can and must cooperate by reporting cases of exploitation and enslavement of men, women and children. Prayer is the force that sustains our common commitment. For this reason, I now invite you to recite, together with me, the *prayer* to Saint Josephine Bakhita that has been distributed in the Square. Let us pray together:

Saint Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured unspeakable hardship and suffering.

Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church.

O Saint Josephine Bakhita, assist all those who are entrapped in slavery.

Intercede with the God of mercy on their behalf, so that the chains of their captivity will be broken.

May God himself free all those who have been threatened, injured or mistreated by the trade and trafficking of human beings. Bring comfort to survivors of this slavery and teach them to look to Jesus as an example of faith and hope, so they may find healing from their wounds.

We ask you to pray for us and to intercede on behalf of us all: that we may not fall into indifference, that we may open our eyes and be able to see the miseries and wounds of our many brothers and sisters deprived of their dignity and their freedom, and may we hear their cry for help. Amen.

Saint Josephine Bakhita, pray for us.

I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims! In particular the faithful of Verona and the *Mendicanti di Sogni* group from Schio.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.  
*Arrivederci!*