



Monthly Reflection:

November 2023

"It is the Lord!" (John 21:7)

Despair had taken root in the hearts of the seven disciples as they sat purposelessly. Peter finally broke the heavy silence, declaring, "I am going fishing." It was an attempt to escape the agonising insecurity that had settled on them. Seeking out the boat they had abandoned years ago, they set out into the sea quite unaware of what awaited them!

It was a night of tedious and fruitless toil. At the break of dawn, they heard a gentle voice that called out from the shore asking them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. The catch that followed was miraculous. Yet for Peter, the realisation when John leaned in and whispered, "It is the Lord!" was more miraculous! His Lord had once again come to fill the emptiness of his heart with His boundless mercy and love.

Three years ago, Peter had witnessed a miracle of the same kind for the first time in his life. (Luke 5:1-11). He first responded to Jesus saying, "Master,...at your word, I will let down the nets." Later, as he beheld the nets bursting with an abundant catch of fish, he was overcome with a profound realisation, crying out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." On that day, Jesus became the Lord in Peter's life.

No one might find it difficult to acknowledge Jesus as a teacher or a prophet. However, one must accept that Jesus is Lord to be his disciple. It requires a leap from the comfort and security of the familiar "boat" (symbolising the world and its illusions of security) into the uncertain waters of complete trust and surrender to the lordship of Christ.

The sacrament of baptism proclaims Jesus as Saviour and Lord and is actualised in one's personal encounter and walk with Him. A Jesus Youth who embraces his call to discipleship declares Jesus as the focal point and ultimate authority of his life. Yet, this is a journey where one fails at times.

We all relate to how the disciples failed Jesus in choosing to go back to their old lifestyle when faced with uncertainty. When our eyes can see the Lord in the storms of our lives, we too, like John, will declare "It is the Lord!" and leap in faith like Peter once again. Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, "Open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life."

Can we identify with John who whispered to his neighbour 'It is the Lord' and with Peter who responded radically on hearing it? Perhaps we are desperately searching for security elsewhere. If we do not kneel before His authority, we will succumb to our desires, ego, fears, and worldly and carnal desires.

Let's pray for the grace to realise like John that 'it is the Lord' and jump into His presence like Peter in that firm conviction. Then we will also be able to see Jesus waiting on the seashore with embers of love and eat the breakfast of joyful life with Jesus. "For they knew it was the Lord."(John 21:12)

-Leo Tom

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