

"Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon..."

Earthy!☐

There is an old expression: "getting down to earth"

It connotes getting practical, getting in sync with one's environment.

And the word "humble" comes from "humus"- the dirt.

A major point of today's Gospel is that Jesus takes us where we are, and as we are.

He gets down to earth.

He does not speak to Peter from on high.

No, he speaks to Peter where he works, where he gets his hands dirty and his feet wet.

His call comes in a fishing boat where stormy water laps at its side and where Peter sweats and flexes his muscles to catch fish, and it comes at the tax collector's table where Matthew does his everyday work.

There is an old adage, "if you want to converse with a farmer, talk to him in his field."

This expresses a profound wisdom.

We see this wisdom worked out in the life of Jesus and the pastoral approach of Pope Francis.

He does not speak from on high. Rather he urges his priests and Bishops to smell like the sheep. And you CAN ONLY DO THAT IF YOU GET CLOSE TO THEIR REAL LIVES, THEIR EVERYDAY STRUGGLES AND PROBLEMS. Over and over he urges his clergy to get out of their sacristies and out with the sheep.

I once took a class from an Native American Medicine Man. He told us to get down on our hands and knees and observe the world from the perspective of the four leggeds. A different view, a different perspective.

"Put out into the deep!" says Jesus.

This is both a real command as well as a metaphor.

To follow Jesus is to plunge into deeper water:

The deep water of faith.

The deep water of hope.

The deep water of love.

That is the water we have plunged into at our baptism.

Pope Francis calls us to a year of renewed mercy.

Mercy means God bends down to lift us up.

It means for us that we get off our high horses and we bend down to lift up the lowly, the bedraggled, the unforgiven.

And so we pray:

We are all in deep water.

So easy for us to drown in our self concerns.

Lead us up.

Lead us out.

Lead us on

May we follow Peter

to the higher ground

that leads to Calvary

and beyond.

Amen