

H.E. Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden's Homily on the First Sunday of Luke



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St. George Cathedral of Stockholm
Sunday, September 28, 2025

Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, on the First Sunday of Luke, the Church sets before us the Gospel reading of the miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5:1-11), where we see the calling of the Apostles, the foundation of discipleship, and the pattern of our own journey with Christ.

The Evangelist describes how the Lord approaches fishermen who had toiled all night and caught nothing. He commands Simon Peter, weary and discouraged, to cast the net once more, this time into the deep.

Against all human expectation, the nets are filled beyond measure.

Astonished, Peter falls before Christ, confessing, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful

man, O Lord.”

Yet the Lord replies with words of comfort and mission: “Do not be afraid; from now on you will catch people.”

St. Cyril of Alexandria notes that the empty nets of the night reveal the futility of human effort apart from Christ. All our labor, if undertaken without the blessing and presence of the Lord, remains fruitless, but when the command of Christ is obeyed, abundance follows. Obedience, not skill or strength, is what fills the nets.

St. Ambrose teaches us that the “deep” into which Peter is told to cast the nets symbolizes the mysteries of divine wisdom.

To remain on the shore is to remain in the shallows of human reasoning; but to venture into the deep with Christ is to be led into the hidden things of God.

The humility of Peter is also central. St. John Chrysostom remarks that Peter’s confession of unworthiness is the proper response to a true encounter with God.

The Lord does not reject Peter for his humility; rather, He transforms him, making him a fisher of people. Here we learn that the recognition of our sins does not disqualify us from discipleship—it becomes the very condition through which God can work His grace.

Finally, we see in the calling of the Apostles the very mission of the Church. As the net gathers fish of every kind, so the preaching of the Gospel gathers people from all nations into the ark of salvation.

But notice also that the nets are strained and nearly breaking. The Fathers interpret this as a sign that the work of mission is difficult, demanding, and requires cooperation. The boats had to work together to bring in the catch, just as all members of the Church must labor together in unity.

Like the fishermen who left everything to follow the Lord, we too are invited to place Christ above all else, trusting that He will make our lives fruitful—not only for ourselves but for the salvation of others.

May the Lord grant us the courage of Peter, the obedience of the Apostles, and the joy of becoming fishers of people, so that His net, the Holy Church, may be filled unto the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen!

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