**“We must obey God rather than men!”**

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to those who were with Him on His journey to the cross. On the third time of revealing Himself to His disciples, Jesus called Peter for the second time to follow Him. The first time Jesus called Peter, Jesus performed a similar miracle He performed in our reading today. The miracles were signs of the commission He would give to Peter and the rest of the apostles.

Matthew and Mark recorded part of Peter’s first call. But Luke gave us a full account. In Luke, with the crowd present, Jesus taught them from Peter’s boat. After, He told Peter to go into deep water and lower his net. When Peter obeyed Jesus’ command, they caught lots of fish that the nets were tearing. Then Peter fell at Jesus’s feet asking our Lord to depart from him because he was a sinner. Jesus told Peter not to be afraid and that he would instead be catching disciples for Him.

Similarly, in our Gospel reading today, after a fruitless night of catching no fish, Jesus told Peter to cast his net on the right side of the boat. This time, Peter the skipper of the boat, did not protest. He obeyed Jesus and they caught lots of fish; but this time, their net did not tear. At the end, Jesus told Peter to follow Him.

Some of the lessons we could learn from both events are, sometimes after we have answered God’s call, we might fall and even deny Him. But God in His mercy, will forgive us again and again and ask us to follow Him each time. It is up to us to use our free will to follow Him.

God is infinitely merciful and the depth of His love for us is unfathomable. His mercy is indescribable kindness. It is by His mercy that we are made believers of His resurrection. It is after we have found God’s mercy that we will find the peace of God. God would not leave any member of the human race without His mercy, except those who do not believe in Him.

When Jesus in His mercy told Peter **“follow me,”** He did not only mean, walk behind me. The deeper meaning of His words is, imitate the ways of my life. That is what the apostles were doing in our first reading. That is why they told the Sanhedrin, **“We must obey God rather than men!”**

The Christianity that the apostles proclaimed was more than a body of teachings. For them, it was a way of life. Their teachings were done to imitate Christ and lead us to live a life in accord with God’s will. Jesus tells us in attempting to follow God’s will, we will encounter difficulty and opposition.

When we look at our society today, we find that the word of God is being pushed aside. There is pressure to accept birth control, abortion, among other things. Instead of hearing, this is my wife, this is my husband, we now hear, this is ‘my partner.’ A new way of distorting reality. Our economic system is geared towards competition which leads many to ignore social justice and marginalization of the poor who cannot take care of themselves.

God’s commandments are being treated as suggestions. His mercy is being regarded as anything goes as long as you have an idea of who He is. But we as Christians should follow Him the same way Peter and the other apostles did.

The apostles were a small group, but because of God’s grace, they accepted to die to self, so they could do God’s will. They were courageous in their convictions which helped them carry out God’s mission, which led them with God’s grace to bring many to Christ.

We must not be complacent in thinking we can do nothing. With God’s grace, we can be faithful and loyal to His teachings and bring others to Christ by the witness of how we live our lives. Our motto should be the same as that of the apostles, **“We must obey God rather than men!”**

As we come to receive Him in the Eucharist, let us promise to follow Him to the end.