

## From the Desk of Fr. Jerry

February 9, 2024

Dear Friends,

Dallas Jenkins is the Christian filmmaker, producer, director, and writer of the popular TV series "The Chosen." The series draws on the four gospels to tell the story of the life of Jesus. Season Five will come out this spring.

Episode Four of Season One he retells the story of the "miracle of the fishes" and the call of Peter recounted in today's gospel. First a word about Luke's gospel.


In Luke's gospel, Jesus delays the call to his first disciples. While the direct call "Come follow Me," occurs early on in Matthew and Mark, Luke first has Jesus demonstrate that divine power is at work in his miracles. Because of the crowds gathered in response to Jesus' miracles, he uses Peter's boat to teach the crowd. After teaching, Jesus tells Peter "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch," Peter responds reluctantly and somewhat hopelessly, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets."

In the "miracle of the fishes" that catch was so abundant that the nets were breaking and the boats were sinking. Peter's partners had to assist. Peter's encounter with divine power makes him deeply aware of himself as a sinner. He said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." It is at this point that Jesus tells Peter, "From now on you will be catching men." Peter, and his associates, James and John leave everything behind and follow Jesus.

Dallas Jenkins tells the story about the creation of Episode Four. To the last minute he did not know how they were going to recreate the scene described in the gospel: an overflowing catch of fish and sinking boats. The time of filming was at hand and Jenkins was worried. The visual effects artists assured him that they would be able to handle the scene, but Jenkins was not so sure.

The outtakes of the filming show how it worked. The nets of the fishermen were filled to the brim with water filled balloons. The weight of the overflowing nets required the muscular strength of the fishermen to haul "the Catch" on board the boats. In the editing room, the visual artists were able to recreate the visual effect so that the balloons actually looked like fishes to tell the profound effect the miracle had on Peter. Jenkins talks about the episode as the "miracle of the miracle of the fishes."

At some time, I am sure you must have felt totally worn and powerless, unable to know what to do next and where to turn for help. Looking back now I can say that has happened to me and so has the "miracle of the miracle." Today, we can give thanks and praise to God for the miracles taking place in our lives, not because of any effort on our part, but from the gracious love of God. It is those miracles that transform our lives just as Peter's life was transformed.



Fr. Jerry Gunderson