In her later years, my mother lived on a lake in Wisconsin, not far from our home. There, our daughters learned to swim and fish. One day, when our younger daughter was about eight, we went to the end of the pier to fish quietly. She had learned to cast her rod after a fashion and was happily doing that when I looked out to where I expected to see the bobber on her line and realized it wasn’t there. Just as I started to ask about it, she gave a little yell as her line suddenly took off and she grabbed her rod to hang on. She saw the foot-long bass jump out of the water a little distance away and her eyes widened. With some help, she got the fish to the pier, where my husband netted it. The amazement of a child who had never caught more than small fish was evident, and she proudly helped clean it for the evening meal.

I can only imagine what the apostles, who were seasoned fishermen, felt that day on the Sea of Galilee, the subject of today’s Gospel. Likely it was amazement at this stranger who apparently knew more about fishing than they did, but there was also a glimpse of an abundance they didn’t know was possible and a sense that Jesus meant life for them. Peter drops to his knees, suddenly aware of his doubts and sins. Jesus simply tells him not to be afraid, shows him what he can do with God’s help, and waits for him to follow. Let’s approach the life God calls us to with the same amazement and humility.

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A Word From Pope Francis

“God lets himself be brought home. He awakens in us a desire to keep him and his life in our homes, in our hearts…Mission is born precisely from this divine allure, by this amazement born of encounter.”

—Meeting with the bishops of Brazil for World Youth Day, July 28, 2013