

5th Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)
February 7, 2010

IT'S GAME TIME BABY!

Are you ready?

Jesus is calling us to step up and play...are you ready?

I've never been a natural athlete, but I've tried.

In High School, I played Freshman Basketball.

Well, I was on the team at least.

I wasn't a starter, but I sure did support the team and got to play a little
here and there throughout the season.

I can remember one game in particular.

There was about 3 minutes left on the clock and I finally got in.

Well, I was so nervous that the first shot I took completely missed the
backboard, the rim, the net, everything.

It was an embarrassing "Air Ball."

But, I went after the ball and never gave up.

I may have missed the basket, but I wasn't lacking a heart...a heart for
the game, for my team, and for my school.

Looking back on it now, it would have been easy for me to say to the
coach, "No, I can't go in...I'm not good enough. Put someone
else in the game."

But I didn't.

Rather, I stepped up, got myself ready, and went in and did my best.

And this is exactly what Jesus calls all of us to do in all aspects of our
lives, namely, to step up, get ourselves ready, and "play ball."

In doing so, we are to look beyond our unworthiness.

In other words, we are to hold ourselves up, not dwell on our faults or failures, but rather, we are to focus on our successes and the fact that Jesus not only purges us from our sins, but also calls us to trust in him and follow him wherever he may go.

And we are to be ready for this anytime...even when we may be exhausted and frustrated from working hard and getting no results...even when we think we've had enough and it's time to simply clean up and go home...even when we least expect it.

Simon [Peter] wasn't expecting it when Jesus chose HIS boat to get into so he could speak to the crowds without getting bombarded by the people.

Rather, Simon was cleaning up his nets.

He had been at it all night and after catching nothing, was tired, dirty, and probably a little cranky from having an unsuccessful night.

But, for some reason, Simon obeys Jesus and gets into the boat with him and after Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd, puts out into deep waters.

Now remember, this is before Simon leaves his fishing career and decides to follow Jesus.

At this point, Simon knows who Jesus is...he's heard the stories and even witnessed Jesus curing his mother-in-law who lay in bed with a fever.

So, at this time, Simon has not yet decided to leave everything behind to follow Jesus...that is, not until the end of the Gospel passage.

After Simon and Jesus are in the deep waters, Jesus surprisingly tells Simon to cast his nets for a catch.

I can only imagine what Simon must have been thinking, “What?! I’ve been fishing all night and have caught nothing! Now, just because you tell me to cast my nets, I’m all of a sudden going to catch something. Yea, right! But, just to amuse you, I’ll do it. Here it goes.”

And what happens?

Of course, Simon catches the largest number of fish he’s ever caught in his entire career.

The catch is so large that he calls the other boat to help him pull it in.

Simon might have been hesitant when he first got into the boat with Jesus and went out into deep water...but, after that catch, Simon realizes the truth.

He realizes that he’s truly in the presence of greatness, holiness, an awesome, unexplainable power.

At the same time, he also realizes his own sinfulness, his own unworthiness, his own imperfection.

Simon wasn’t ready for this...but it came nonetheless.

What’s more is that with all this also came his calling to follow Jesus and become a “Fisher of Men.”

And upon hearing the call – IT’S GAME TIME, BABY – Simon steps up, gets himself ready, and enters the game ready to play.

Are we ready to do the same?

Are we ready to let go of our tendency to be hesitant, to trust in Jesus,
and be open to do extraordinary things?

Or, are we still making excuses...we're too old, too young, too poor,
too rich, too nervous, too excited...too this, too that?

It's time to simply let go and trust in Jesus.

It's time to enter the game and play.

And so, let's put away all our anxieties, all our concerns, all our
excuses and simply have faith in Jesus who will bless us with an
abundance of grace.