

February 10, 2019

Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster

Susan Gascho-Cooke, Daryl Snider and Andrew Pauls

“Cantio et compositio Divina” on Luke 5:1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’ Simon answered, ‘Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.’ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!’ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.’ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Cantio et compositio Divina (This is an attempt to combine the idea of *lectio divina* with exploration via songwriting ... thanks to Louise Ranck for the inspiration for the title!)

Introduction by Susan Gascho-Cooke:

In the month of February, Daryl, Andrew and I are all independently participating in a national songwriting challenge called “February is Album Writing Month” (fawm.org). The challenge is to write 14 songs in the 28 days of February. So, I had the idea to explore today’s gospel text by writing a song about it. And since Daryl and Andrew had already agreed to do a crazy amount of songwriting on very short deadlines, I invited them to join me in using Luke 5:1-11 as a songwriting prompt. So, we’ll each share the song that we wrote in the last 48-72 hours. They may not be complete songs, but they’re explorations of the text from three different points of view.

I hope that you, too, will be inspired to take whatever your creative mediums are, and use them to explore this text, or other scripture texts. These songs are a way of approaching scripture much like poet Billy Collins’ suggestion for approaching a poem. In his poem, “Introduction to Poetry,” he advises readers to, among other things, “drop a mouse into a poem and watch him probe his way out.” May you find insight, inspiration, comfort and challenge in your own explorations of this scripture, and in scripture as a whole.

If you’d like to hear the three songs, and hear my and Daryl’s comments on our songs and the process of writing them, head to communitymennonite.org and look for “Recent Sermons” at the bottom of the page. Part 1 of 2 can be found at [this link](#).

First, Andrew Pauls' song: Andrew was an intern here at CMCL several summers ago, through Goshen College's Ministry Inquiry Program. He and his wife, Laura, live here in Lancaster and attend East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church.

Horizon, by Andrew Pauls

Note: Not sure if the speaker is the fish or the Divine or what. I suppose the song turned into a larger metaphor for doing life. It's one of those songs that will reveal itself to me later and I'm not sure what it means right now.

Get up and get dressed in the dark,
Go ahead, put on your warmest clothes.
Out to the water underneath the stars,
Looking for a different kind of ghost.

Chorus:

Trying to find another cure
In the water, in the sand.
Where the horizon meets the shore,
It's where I was, it's where I am.

Pushing out to water dark and deep,
With empty nets and buoyant hearts.
Here we grow the secrets we can't keep,
And this is when the waiting starts.

CHORUS

Cast your nets on the other side,
Where hope abounds, the fragrant flowers bloom.
Where you look is where I hide,
And tell me now, who is catching whom?

CHORUS

Go a Little Deeper, by Daryl Snider

Two boats, empty on the shore
Long night, longer faces
Morning sun warms the sand
Longing people wanting graces

What did he teach? Why from a boat?
What did the crowding people hear?
Why parables of sheep and goats?
Why so often "Do not fear!"?

Refrain: *Have you failed? Try, try again.
This time, go a little deeper
Cast your net out wider then
This time might just be a keeper.*

Would they have followed his direction
With faith or with a bit of snark?
How do you read the inflection
Is it grouper, or is it shark?

What would he have known of fishing?
Building boats was more his trade
Maybe he just knew their wishing
Or the fishes' deeper shade.

Refrain

Two boats, full, come back to shore
And as with any long told story
It's hard to tell the fact from lore
This one wags a tale of glory

I hope the fishes were not wasted
Maybe dried for later feasts
Now the leaving does seem hasty
Irresponsible at least!

Simon's Song, by Susan Gascho-Cooke

when my mother warned me shallow waters can't absorb a storm
I thought she meant the sea; I thought she meant the Galilee
where the cool winds from the mountains, ringing 'round the sun-warmed sea
can sweep down upon the waters, stirring up the boats on the Galilee
but she meant me... the storm was me (2x)

my father warned me swapping night for day would catch the run
would bring the sardines and the binies; would hide the nets from the glint of the tattle-tale sun
but the price to pay for the clear of the lake is the nights you're not at home
the nights she'll sleep without you; the days you'll warm the bed alone
*but he said go ... you gotta go anyway
cuz as the fish go so ... you gotta go anyway*

when the man with the fever-quelling hands came along the shore
I was scrubbing seaweed off the deck; cursing phantom fish that never showed
boats that come home empty don't have much to clear away

but you clean them full or empty; you clean your nets anyway
and then you go home... even if you go empty
you go home ... yes, you go home

when he asked me to set sail again, there was a debt I owed him
he'd worked a healing wonder ... on the mother of my wife
so I stowed the nets and rowed my way; with tired arms I rowed him
while he spoke to the crowd on the shoreline; skipping stories across the Galilee
& he spoke hope... and he spoke riddles
they ate the hope ... and they drank the riddles

afterward, he asked me to put out into the deep
and to lower my nets down again ... down into the sea
Good Carpenter, this fisherman just spent the night right here
Not a fish was in this water; sometimes they just disappear
God I worked the whole night here ...
yes I worked the whole night here

But Bless your heart, since you say so; I'll cast my nets and line;
Against my better judgment; against the test of time,
Well, the daylight got us fish, alright; the daylight almost drowned us
We would have perished with our jackpot; had a second boat not found us
and I did not, I did not believe
though I was unexpectant, still my nets were full