

## Founder's Day February 8, 2010: Preaching at Eucharist

**Yesterday's Gospel** reminded us of the call of three experienced fisherman, Peter, James and John. By the Lake of Gennesaret, Jesus asked them to put out into deep water and lower their just cleaned nets for an exceptional catch. What a surprise! Such overwhelming abundance put them in danger of sinking and needing partners to help. Then Jesus' words of "do not be afraid" invited them to a new life and a new fishing career. They left everything to follow Jesus.

**In today's Gospel** Jesus and the disciples are tying up their boat at Gennesaret again and the people are scurrying about the countryside to bring all their sick to be healed. Was this the new "salmon run" that Jesus had promised?

**Today on Founder's day**, we are reminded of three young inexperienced Dominicans being called to deeper waters of an exceptional abundance in new life and ministry. Sisters Maria Pia, 24, Salesia, 21 and Amanda, 17, just days after stepping off the train from New York, were teaching German speaking children in San Francisco. They, too, must have heard the consoling words of "be not afraid" as I will be with you.

**At our 1976 centenary**, Sister Mary Thomas wrote, "Someplace, somewhere, Mother Pia caught the vision, caught it, believed in it, loved it, entwined it in her heart, and lived it." And what was the vision she caught? I believe it is the same as our General Chapter theme challenging us today: "**The love of God impels us to preach the Word.**"

Indeed, Mother Pia's trust was anchored in "God Alone" as she beckoned new partners in her unfolding of God's call. She witnesses **living contemplatively**. Often in her diary she wrote of worry in decisions, heartbreak, grief and troubles that were always brought to God...recommending all her affairs to Jesus...including the bills to be paid. She prayed in thanks for all graces and strength, and begged the Lord's love to be bestowed on all.

The gift of God was kindled in her with the power of the Spirit to respond to the needs of the poor and vulnerable. **She listened deeply to the stories of her day**. The voices were many from near and far. It was her own mother saying "You can enter the Dominicans across the street in New York but the Notre Dame Sisters in Philadelphia are too far from home." Or Mother Superior Seraphina Staimer listening to Bishop Sadoc Alemany for ministry in California. Or other voices Pia sought in Europe to confirm true Dominican life for her fledgling congregation. Or Raquel Torres, the student at Immaculate Conception Academy, expressing the need for religious educators in Mexico. Because Pia listened and responded we have **celebrated 100 years of our preaching mission in Mexico!**

Let us enter into **Sacred Conversation** with Mother Pia as we glimpse her life in *Her Days Unfolded* diary and visit in God's Acre but more so in her spirit alive in her daughters of Dominic today. May her example of faith and courage not be forgotten...for as Archbishop Mitty's homily reminded, then we come to expect less of ourselves.

**As we receive our renewed Constitutions as a branch from her life work**, may our Mother Maria Pia ever intercede for us so that we may go deeper into mystery of God's love and allow that vision to continue to be caught, believed, loved and entwined in our hearts as we live these *Constitutions* in the challenges and joys of our days unfolding.