

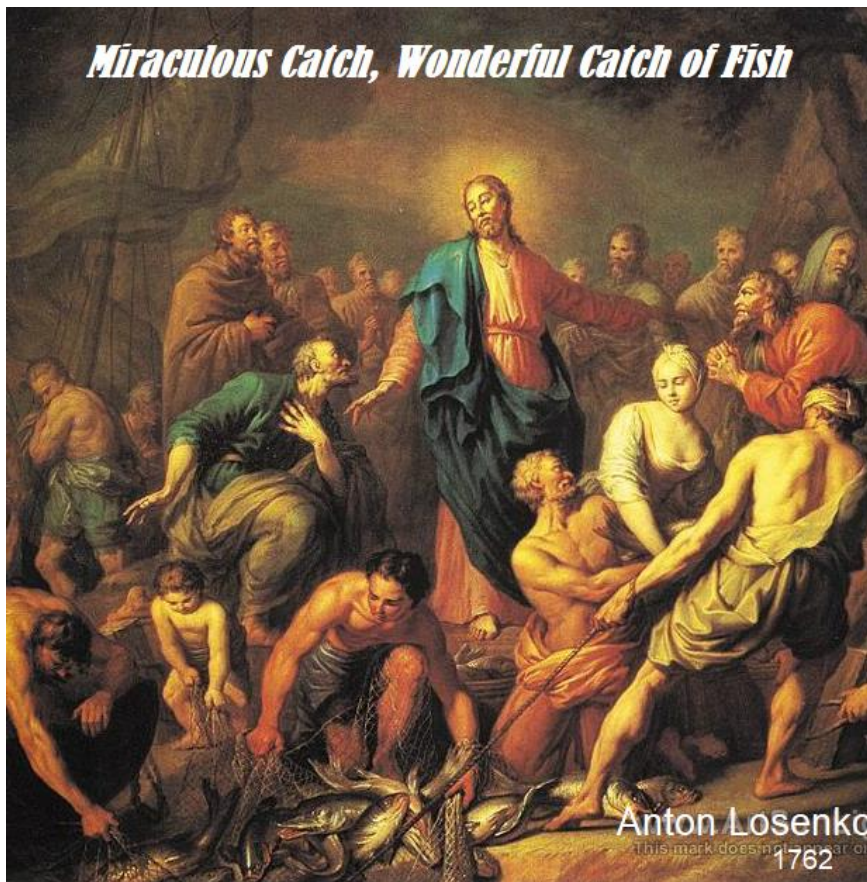
Christ calls men to go into the world to fish for men and make them part of His kingdom in the Holy Christian Church. Thus, the Church and the Office of the Holy Ministry go hand in hand and the nets with which they are given to fish are Word and Sacrament.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF CONCORD
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
THE DEFENSE OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION
ARTICLES VII & VIII: OF THE CHURCH

1] The Seventh Article of our Confession, in which we said that the Church is the congregation of saints, they have condemned, and have added a long disquisition, that the wicked are not to be separated from the Church since John has compared the Church to a threshing-floor on which wheat and chaff are heaped together, Matt. 3:12, and Christ has compared it to a net in which 2] there are both good and bad fishes, Matt. 13:47. It is, verily, a true saying, namely, that there is no remedy against the attacks of the slanderer. Nothing can be spoken with such care that it can escape detraction. 3] For this reason we have added the Eighth Article, lest any one might think that we separate the wicked and hypocrites from the outward fellowship of the Church, or that we deny efficacy to Sacraments administered by hypocrites or wicked men. . . . 5] . . . the Church is not only the fellowship of outward objects and rites, as other governments, but it is originally a fellowship of faith and of the Holy Ghost in hearts. [The Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward signs, but it consists especially in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God]; which fellowship nevertheless has outward marks so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. . . . And this Church alone is called the body of Christ, which Christ renews, sanctifies and governs by His Spirit, as Paul testifies, Eph. 1:22 sq., when he says: And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, 6] the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Wherefore, those in whom Christ does not act [through His Spirit] are not the members of Christ. . . . 7] . . . Neither have we said anything new. Paul has defined the Church precisely in the same way, Eph. 5:25f, that it should be cleansed in order to be holy. And he adds the outward marks, the Word and Sacraments. For he says thus: Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. . . .” we have presented this sentence almost in the very words. Thus also the Church is defined by the article in the Creed which teaches us to believe that there is a holy Catholic Church.

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Miraculous Catch, Wonderful Catch of Fish



Anton Losenko
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