

*The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew*, by Duccio

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At the outset of his public ministry, Jesus encounters Peter and Andrew, fishing on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus issues an urgent appeal: “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people” (Mark 1:16–18). Duccio (di Buoninsegna, ca. 1260–1319) captures this encounter in tempera for the two-sided Maestà altarpiece in the Cathedral at Siena, Italy (1308–1311). The style anticipates the Renaissance with an attempt at depth through modeling, contour, and compositional divisions. Christ stands on a rocky shore that is painted as a strong vertical on the left side of the picture. The use of gold behind the disciples, retained from the medieval tradition, creates a sense of depth and indicates a movement toward naturalism in painting. The net, transparent and full of fish, dangles in front of the boat as it is drawn out of the

water. Duccio received the largest payment given to an artist up to that time (3,000 gold florins) for the Maestà. Originally, the entire altarpiece was nearly 15 feet wide and 17 feet high, depicting some 70 biblical scenes. This small panel (approx. 16" x 17") was part of the back of the Maestà, depicting scenes of Christ as a teacher.