

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Lectionary: 75

Reading 1 - [Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8](#)

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above.

They cried one to the other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!" At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke.

Then I said, "Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember that he had taken with tongs from the altar.

He touched my mouth with it, and said, "See, now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged."

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" "Here I am," I said; "send me!"

Responsorial Psalm - [Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 7-8](#) R. (1c) In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.

Reading 2 - [1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#)

I am reminding you, brothers and sisters, of the gospel I preached to you, which you indeed received and in which you also stand. Through it you are also being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. After that, Christ appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born abnormally, he appeared to me. For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective. Indeed, I have toiled harder than all of them; not I, however, but the grace of God that is with me. Therefore, whether it be I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Gospel - [Luke 5:1-11](#)

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

Leave the boats behind...

It is a totally natural outcome from the faith that we have in Jesus which leads us to the unique experience and joy of knowing him and putting him unconditionally at the center of our life. That is an experience that we must share, not because we are told to, but because we cannot help doing so. True discipleship of itself overflows into apostleship. This is what happened when Isaiah when he encountered God. This is what happened on that day when Peter, James and John left everything and went after Jesus. This was what happened when Saul encountered the risen Christ.

After the sensational catch of fish, Peter is absolutely overwhelmed by what has happened. He knows that he is present before the power of God himself. All his arrogance disappears, and he is overcome by his own smallness and unworthiness. He exclaims: Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man! It is, in fact, a true sign of an experience with God. It is a reaction which we find in all the three readings today. Isaiah says, for instance: Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips...yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts! Paul, not particularly known for his modesty, says: ...I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle... In the presence of God, they are given a glimpse of God's purity, his love, his worthiness. In comparison with the majesty and overwhelming goodness of God, they see themselves in a new light: they see how selfish and weak and unworthy they are. Only when they are humbled can the real adventure of life begin.

The Christian life begins with the gift of faith and accepting the message as true and credible and to put one's total trust in God. Authentic faith not only accepts the content of God's message but involves a total surrender of oneself and all one has and is into God's hands. A complete letting go. "Go out into the deep water... Trust me completely... and you will be in for a pleasant surprise." Christianity is not just a dogmas and moral norms that a Christian must obey. Christianity is faith and love, *a total following of a person*: the amazing person of Jesus Christ. It is this disposition, this openness that will make possible powerful and transformative experiences of the Father, Son, and / or Holy Spirit. Like the Saints before us in Scripture and tradition, we too must have an experience of being humbled before God, of recognizing that we are not worthy and that God is Holy.

To say, as we do at Mass like the Angels praising God in the first reading, that God is Holy, Holy, Holy – that God is Lord of hosts and heaven and earth are full of the glory of God,¹ is to say "God is thrice holy, the highest form of superlative available in Hebrew... God stands far above all other beings, and is their creator... God has none of the limitations and imperfections that created beings have."² Isaiah is cleansed and consoled as soon as he humbly acknowledges his unworthiness and insignificance before God. His instinctive sense of fear is immediately replaced by a generous and trusting response on the prophet's part: he is ready to do what God wants.³

As we read today, we are also invited not only to follow and make Jesus' Way our own, but to become apostles, masters of transmitting the message of Jesus to others. The word 'apostle' means a person delegated and sent out to convey a message or carry out a mission on his or her master's behalf. These three men were called and, indeed, every person who wishes to be known as a Christian is called not only to be a disciple, a follower, but also an apostle, a herald, a proclaimer.

¹ [The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II](#), Third Typical Edition (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), 650.

² James Gavigan, Brian McCarthy, and Thomas McGovern, eds., [Major Prophets](#), The Navarre Bible (Dublin; New York: Four Courts Press; Scepter Publishers, 2005), 67.

³ James Gavigan, Brian McCarthy, and Thomas McGovern, eds., [Major Prophets](#), The Navarre Bible (Dublin; New York: Four Courts Press; Scepter Publishers, 2005), 68.

As the relationship grows it affects and transforms us and becomes the guiding truth in all the circumstances of one's life. Participating in the divine life we are challenged to love, to have compassion, to practice justice, to live in freedom, to be able to forgive and be reconciled, to be kind, gentle and accepting; it is to seek, to find and to respond to him in all things. It is, because of this, to live lives of joy and peace amid pain and turmoil.

The Gospel today ends with two abandoned boats full of fish on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Here am I; send me!