

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time - Lectionary: 64

Reading 1 - [Isaiah 49:3, 5-6](#)

The LORD said to me: You are my servant, Israel, through whom I show my glory. Now the LORD has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb, that Jacob may be brought back to him and Israel gathered to him; and I am made glorious in the sight of the LORD, and my God is now my strength! It is too little, the LORD says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

Responsorial Psalm - [Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10](#) R/ (8a and 9a) Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Reading 2 - [1 Corinthians 1:1-3](#)

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel - [John 1:29-34](#)

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."

A Light to the Nations: The Testimony of the Lamb

Reading 1: The Prophecy (Isaiah 49:3, 5-6)

- ◆ **God's Chosen Servant**
The Lord addresses his servant, "Israel," through whom he will show his glory.
- ◆ **A Mission to Restore Israel**
The servant's initial purpose is to bring the tribes of Jacob and the survivors of Israel back to God.
- ◆ **A Light to the Nations**
God declares the mission to Israel "too little" and expands it, making his servant a light so salvation may reach the ends of the earth.

Reading 2: The Calling (1 Corinthians 1:1-3)

- ◆ **Called by the Will of God**
Paul introduces himself as one "called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God."
- ◆ **A Community "Called to be Holy"**
The letter is addressed to the church in Corinth, those sanctified in Christ Jesus, along with all who call upon the Lord.
- ◆ **Blessing of Grace and Peace**
Paul bestows a formal greeting of "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Gospel: The Testimony (John 1:29-34)

- ◆ **"Behold, the Lamb of God"**
John the Baptist identifies Jesus with this title, declaring that he is the one "who takes away the sin of the world."
- ◆ **The Divine Sign Revealed**
John testifies he saw the Spirit descend "like a dove from heaven" and remain on Jesus, fulfilling a sign from God.
- ◆ **The Ultimate Testimony: "The Son of God"**
Based on the sign of the descending Spirit, John confirms his testimony that Jesus is the Son of God.
- ◆ **Pre-existence and Higher Rank**
John acknowledges that although Jesus comes after him, "he ranks ahead of me because he existed before me."

Theological Connection: The Reflection

- ◆ **A Retrospective on Jesus's Baptism**
These readings allow for a deeper reflection on the Lord's Baptism, revealing more dimensions of the event.
- ◆ **John the Baptist's Eyewitness Account**
The Gospel is presented as John's personal reminiscence of the baptism, providing details he witnessed firsthand.
- ◆ **An Apostle's Perspective**
The author of the Gospel, the Apostle John, was likely a disciple of John the Baptist, suggesting he heard this testimony directly.

NotebookLM

Identity and Mission

Our readings for the Second Sunday of ordinary time speak about two things: the identity of Jesus, and the mission of Jesus. He was revealed as the Son of God and the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. We need to know who Jesus is, if we want to be his disciples. We also need to know what his mission is, if we want to be his missionary disciples. Because a good disciple is also an apostle. By definition, a disciple is a follower, whereas an apostle is the bearer of a message from a superior. The Christian disciple not only follows the gospel of Jesus but also engages in the apostolic mission.

The Identity

The apostle St. John as a follower of John the Baptist would have heard all this first hand. The Gospel reading from St. John allows us to reflect more deeply on the Baptism of our Lord, giving us somewhat of a retrospective on what just happened. John the Baptists personal reminiscence of the baptism provides us with more of the dimensions of the Lord's baptism. The second reading speaks to our sanctification and identity in Christ, forged through Baptism and speaks to our responsibility to work out our holiness.

When Christians are baptized, we enter the communion of the Trinity, their divine life. We are anointed with the oil of chrism, symbolizing the coming of the Holy Spirit into our souls, just as it came upon Christ at his baptism. At the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, a second anointing with that same chrism is the instrument of the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit, just as it came to the Apostles at Pentecost. In the New Covenant in Christ, the age of the Church, every Christian becomes, in Christ, a Temple of God's presence on earth.

This is why every Christian has the same fundamental vocation - to become holy, to shape our lives in accordance with the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. Through the work of the Holy Spirit God gives us the power to live a holy life, differing from other paths of how to live. Therefore, it is essential to learn how to let the Holy Spirit work in us to make this possible, by learning to recognize the voice and prompting of the Holy Spirit. You might find that Spiritual Direction is a helpful way to engage in this learning. This is exactly what St Paul means when he writes to the Corinthians, "you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy."

Our own holiness cannot be understood apart from the holiness of God. In the Old Testament, God alone is called Holy. The biblical Hebrew word for holy is *kadosh*. God is the Holy One. ^{1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 6:3} God is holy because God is other. God is "set apart" from all things, God transcends all things, and God is different from every created thing. In the Old Testament, outside of God, only places (the Temple), objects (such as cups and altars), and times (such as the Sabbath) could be *kadosh*, or holy. In the New Testament a shift happens, holiness is extended to members of the Mystical Body of Christ. We heard it in St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians that we read today, in his reminder that we are "called to be holy". The word St Paul uses for "holy" is the Greek word "hagios", which literally means "set apart." Four Gospels, we learn that Jesus Christ is the Holy One of God. And according to apostolic teaching and St. Paul, we learn that by participation through Baptism and becoming part of the Mystical Body of Christ the Church, for the first time God's chosen people become "holy" as well. We are set apart from the world in such a way that our lives are to become transformed.

St Paul also gives us a fantastic tactic for growing in this holiness. He says he is writing to the Christians in Corinth, who had received salvation through Christ, along with *"all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."* To call upon the name of Jesus Christ - this is the essential exercise in our pursuit of holiness. We cannot become what God created us to be if we depend on our own strength alone. If we could do it ourselves, Christ would never have sent us the Holy Spirit. To call upon the name of Jesus

Christ is to ask for help, to plug into God's grace - it means having a healthy prayer life. Without a healthy prayer life, our souls are like gardens without water - the plants wither and shrink, no spiritual flowers blossom and no spiritual fruits ripen.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (+202), in his book *Adversus Haereses*, defined the glory of God. "*The glory of God is the human being fully alive.*" The most powerful life lived by a human being is the kind that many of us never fully experience. It is a life lived in the Spirit. At Church, sometimes from our parents and from the lives of the Saints, we hear about what it would be like to live in the Spirit. But, because of our distractions, our various kinds of woundedness, or maybe our inability to believe in the impossible - we tend to hear the message and think it is meant for someone else. Yet we all know because of the little ways that we do allow it to happen, that life is more powerful, more meaningful, more purposeful, if and when God is our priority and the Holy Spirit is allowed to guide us. As new creations we have been freed to live the fullness of our identity in Christ. We are free to be 'all in', or to choose to 'sit on the fence' or 'warm the bench'. God's plan is for us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, Mary, Joseph and all the Saints. That we establish a 'fundamental option' in favor of Holiness. Assent is giving yourself away to the Lord of the universe and then allowing the Holy Spirit to move you to the most powerful life you could never have imagined possible.

God calls us to embrace fully the theological virtue of love. The nature of a love relationship between us and God is to hold nothing back, to offer ourselves as gift freely given in response to God's gift of self freely given. The Holy Spirit teaches us what this means. Guides us toward the holiness to which we are called and forms in the way, truth, and life of Christ. It is Jesus as a man who models this powerful life lived in union with God. Created in the image and likeness of God, we are made to find our perfection in loving as God loves. There is no duty involved in such a Love. Mary was not fulfilling a duty; her assent was full and free. She could not have imagined what God would ask of her, nor could she have foreseen the life she would live. We ask ourselves how she could possibly agree to God's proposition. We lessen the value of her choices by saying it was the fullness of Grace that made it possible. What we should remember is that just like us, Mary also had to have and grow in a relationship with God. For those who need further convincing that we don't need to be 'full of Grace' to say 'yes' and keep saying 'yes', think about Saint Joseph. He had a plan. As with most men it might not have been an elaborate plan and he may not have been open to following a road map or asking for directions. He planned to be the husband of Mary, to have a family, to pass on his faith and trade to children. Joseph was also a man of faith who was open to the prompting of Holy Spirit, and when God revealed a small part of a greater plan for Joseph he said 'Yes'.

In this 'Love Affair' with God, we are fully united with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we find ourselves empowered to become holy enabling us to love others with shocking depths of mercy. If our plans for our life, marriage and family are not in sync with the Lord's plan for us, then we will never fully realize our 'Call to Holiness'. "*Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in faith,*" says St. Paul, "*Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?*" ^{2 Cor 13:5} The original plan of the Father calls us to live fully through free gift of self in love; first to God and then to the others we encounter each day in our homes, parishes, workplace, communities and world.

Question / Reflection

1. Are we people who live subdued lives, sacrificing and fulfilling a devout duty while feeling like your hopes and dreams are too often broken by a God who it seems too often asks too much?
2. Have you given your complete 'yes' to the Lord's plan for your life? Do you renew that 'yes' every day?

The Mission

We tend to lose touch with the innocent and impressionable child that once was us. When was the last time you relaxed, sighed and truly 'Wondered' with 'Awe' at something? Layers of life experience compounded by the annihilation of the 'magical' by science, and the dulling of the imagination by streaming mind-numbing media, have desensitized us to what is truly wonder filling and awe inspiring. Wonder and Awe move our minds to question how 'primordial ooze' and 'big, but random bangs' could have produced all that is and woven it all together with such intricate beauty. That's only the beginning. Once the imagination is opened by one of these moments, whether it's one of great joy or sadness, we begin to ask the ultimate questions about our place within the beautiful mystery that has begun to captivate us.

At the Meeting for Friendship Among Peoples in Rimini in 1982, Pope John Paul II reminded us that, "*The basic human drama is the failure to perceive the meaning of life, to live without a meaning*". Living the covenant and avoiding the drama of failure might seem to be a challenge that cannot be met, at least not fully. In truth, it is. Adam and Eve provide plenty of proof of this. Our own lives prove this. So also, where grace abounds and faith blossoms, we know that 'with God all things are possible'. The starting point, every day, is whether we believe the Word of God and the Life of Christ. Jesus makes it possible for us to answer the call and live the covenant. Is there more to Life? More than we could ever imagine!

More to life can often be what seems to be more than our fair share of the bitter chill that makes us shrink back. In Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter "Fides et Ratio" (Faith and Reason) from 1998, he reminds us, "*Where might the human being seek the answer to dramatic questions such as pain, the suffering of the innocent and death...if not in the light streaming from the mystery of Christ's passion, death and resurrection?*" The Mass is where the world of sorrow and the world of joy meet, especially in that one moment on the altar. The foundation for living the covenant is the Sacraments, our individual and communal prayers and listening to the Word of God. As each of us discovers our identity and role in God's grand and mysterious plan, we come to more fully recognize the living presence of Jesus Christ in our lives. We become more completely united as His Body and more empowered for our divine mission. Fearless. In possession of a peace that surpasses understanding. Faith that cannot be shaken. Love that will not be diminished. Hope that cannot be lost. The challenge to Rise with Christ is met with the passion to raise up others.

One of the basic obstacles to living the covenant is who we imagine Jesus to be. Our response to Him will be tempered or compelling depending on our vision of Jesus. It is important to go beyond our conceptions of Him and pursue an encounter with the real person of Christ. We all find it hard to give ourselves to a mere idea. We are made to lead and to follow real people who live and die for real love. Hearing, reading about or seeing from a distance the heroes who capture our imagination is never as powerful as a face-to-face encounter which will inevitably set us on fire. He is here always among us, but we need to have the eyes to see and the ears to hear.

To be able to follow as we are called, it is essential that we become consciously aware of our need for redemption and of the crosses of our own sins that we carry with us. When we begin to let scripture shape our lives, the Holy Spirit begins to transform and shape our hearts and minds. By simply spending time with the Mass readings of the day and looking for the presence of God throughout the rest of the day, the Holy Spirit will increasingly lead us to a very different experience of daily life. For many of us the challenge to be the Saints we are called to become is frightening. Few among us are easily able to boldly go where we have never been, especially without having first been able to Google some information, road maps and

secure some guarantees that we will remain in full control of everything. We are faced with the same choices, doubt and uncertainty that Peter faced when Jesus called him out of the boat. ^{Mt 14:28}

Question / Reflection

1. Has the truth about Jesus Christ set you free?
2. Have you ever experienced the Lord's self-emptying love?
3. Do you seek to exercise your freedom for the greatest good, or as that which frees you from whatever you don't like, don't want, or will not do?
4. What things of this world and self-serving desires enslave you?

Sometimes it happens that just the right person with the right gifts, passion and action comes along just when you really need what they have to offer. More often, we recognize these people and can call them when we are in need. They possess a certain kind of 'attractiveness' to others. We may not recognize it for what it is, at first, but we come to understand that it is not a personal charisma. It isn't Hollywood. It isn't commercialized beauty. It reflects the one who is the ultimate 'attraction'. The intrigue that surrounded Jesus dominated people's interests and made a personal encounter with him a priority. Are others drawn to us in this way? We are called to be that person for others, and we must wonder what the world would be like without those who heroically answer the call and what could the world be like if more of us were willing to become the Saints that we are called to be!

Holiness is like a magnet that draws us toward it. These 'Saints Among Us' haven't just encountered the values of Christ, the historical actions of Christ or the morality of Christ. They have encountered him in such a way that they recognize his presence in everyday life down to the core of their being. The more time they spend with him in the Word, Prayer and Serving others the more they are strengthened in the Way, the Truth and the Life. They become the brilliant lights that illuminate the darkness that threatens to consume. For these people, the presence of Christ is as real to them as the people and things around them that they can see, hear and touch with their natural senses. In a world of brokenness we are all called to make it eminently possible for others to encounter the living Christ.

Question / Reflection

1. How can you propose the Lord's freedom in your world?
2. How can we bring freedom to those who are enslaved by oppression and suffering?

We were created not to indulge ourselves, but to give ourselves - to love in the full, Christian sense of the word, laying down our lives for God and neighbor, just like Christ. Christ conquered sin and evil by loving, by giving himself to others. We conquer sin and evil in the same way - by loving, by giving without counting the cost, by forgiving without conditions. Christ is our King and our Leader. And so, to be his loyal subjects and followers, we too should bravely become Lambs of God - sacrificial offerings on the altar of our own crosses.

Life in Christ proposes something radically new: true freedom is not freedom from others, but freedom for them. By fully embracing the people in our lives in the same way God embraces us and we embrace God, we are completely free. The paradox of Christianity is that to be fully free, to be fully human, to be fully alive, we must be bound to each other. The longing present in every heart for a full and free life that is worthy of the human person must be met with the love and presence of Jesus through his missionary disciples who are in a passionate love affair with Him.

As 'icons' through which the Lord can show the world himself, it is up to us to show the world a new experience of freedom. Do we show the people we know and work with how our life with Christ provides

us with liberation from the oppressive powers of the world? Because without the experience of an utterly dependent relationship with the Lord, all of us are subject to be defined by those with the most money, the most guns and the most power. Do we want these people to determine and define what it means to be human and be the sole determiners of our human rights? Pope John Paul II, in his first encyclical, "[Redemptor Hominis](#)" (The Redeemer of Man), reminds us that our undaunted desire and unflinching actions must be *"to direct man's gaze, awareness and experience towards the mystery of God, to help all people to be familiar with the profundity of the redemption taking place in Jesus Christ"*.

Discussion / Reflection

1. Do you see how you can be Christ's 'icon' for the liberation of the world?

Summary

The homily presents a cohesive theological framework centered on the dual concepts of identity and mission, as revealed through the testimony of John the Baptist and the teachings of St. Paul. The core takeaway is that a Christian's identity is fundamentally rooted in Jesus Christ—who is identified as the Son of God and the Lamb of God—and this identity intrinsically defines the mission. Jesus's mission was to be a "light to the nations," conquering darkness through sacrificial love. Through Baptism, Christians share in this identity, becoming sanctified, holy, and "set apart." Consequently, they also share in his mission. This shared mission is not achieved through personal willpower but through a deep, prayerful relationship with God, reliance on sacramental grace, and openness to the Holy Spirit. True freedom is found not in self-gratification but in becoming an "icon" of Christ's light and love for others, fulfilling the purpose for which they were created.



The theological framework is built upon the specific scriptural readings for the **Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**.

Reading	Reference	Core Message
The Prophecy	Isaiah 49:3, 5-6	The Lord's servant, Israel, is tasked with a mission that is "too little" if it only restores Israel. The mission is expanded: "I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."
The Calling	1 Corinthians 1:1-3	Paul addresses the church in Corinth, and all Christians everywhere, as those who have been "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy." He bestows a blessing of "grace to you and peace."
The Testimony	John 1:29-34	John the Baptist provides a personal, eyewitness testimony identifying Jesus. He declares him the "Lamb of God" and, based on the sign of the descending Spirit, testifies that "he is the Son of God."

The sources provide practical guidance on how to live out this shared mission in daily life, emphasizing the concepts of freedom, attraction, and witness.

Call to Action	Description
Be an Icon	A Christian is meant to be an "icon" through which the light of Christ can shine. The "dirty windshield" analogy illustrates how personal "grime" (sin, distraction) can obscure this light, requiring conscious attention to keep it clean.
Be on Fire	The mission requires being "on fire" with the Holy Spirit—a state of passion for God's priorities, for holiness, and for the salvation of souls. This manifests as a "newfound joy."
Be Truly Free	True freedom is found only in Christ. It is not "freedom <i>from</i> " others or rules, but "freedom <i>for</i> others"—the freedom to love and serve without fear. This stands in contrast to the world's false freedoms found in chasing power, popularity, possessions, or escape. The paradox is that to be fully free, one must be bound to God and others in love.
Be Attractive	This is not about physical appearance but about letting the joy and passion for God draw others in. Holiness acts like a magnet. The "Saints Among Us" who have truly encountered Christ possess this attractiveness.
Be Sacrificial	The mission calls for giving oneself away through love and forgiveness, even when it is costly. The more one gives, "the more alive we become."

More Questions for Deeper Reflection

1. Analyze the relationship between Jesus' identity as the "Lamb of God" and his mission as a "light to the nations." How do these two concepts from the readings inform the mission of a baptized Christian in the contemporary world?
2. The sources describe holiness using the Hebrew word *kadosh* and the Greek word *hagios*, both meaning "set apart." Discuss what it means for a Christian to be "set apart" from the world while simultaneously being sent into it on a mission.
3. The homily contrasts true freedom in Christ ("freedom for others") with worldly freedom (chasing power, popularity, possessions). Using examples from the text, explain this paradox of Christianity and how, according to the sources, one becomes "fully alive" by being "bound to each other."
4. Trace the role of the Holy Spirit as described in the readings. How does the Spirit function in the identification of Jesus at his baptism, the sanctification of the believer, and the empowering of the Christian for their mission?
5. Using the analogies of the "icon" and the "grimy windshield," construct an argument for the importance of self-examination and prayer in the life of a missionary disciple. How do these practices enable a person to more effectively reflect Christ's light to others?

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Apostle	The bearer of a message from a superior. A Christian disciple not only follows Jesus but also engages in the apostolic mission.
Disciple	A follower. By definition, a disciple of Jesus is one who follows his gospel.
Hagios	The Greek word for "holy" used by St. Paul, which literally means "set apart." In the New Testament, this quality is extended to the baptized members of the Mystical Body of Christ.
Holiness	Being made holy or sacred to God (<i>sanctified</i>). It involves being "set apart" (<i>kadosh, hagios</i>), transformed by God's Spirit, and seeking the human perfection possible in this life. It is a calling for all Christians, not just for recognized saints.
Icon	A metaphor for a baptized Christian through whom the light of Christ is meant to shine into the hearts and minds of others.
Kadosh	The biblical Hebrew word for "holy." In the Old Testament, God alone is called <i>kadosh</i> , signifying that God is "other" and "set apart" from all created things.
Lamb of God	A title for Jesus, spoken by John the Baptist. It refers to the perfect, sacrificial lamb prophesied in the scriptures who takes away the sin of the world.
Mission	The purpose for which one is sent. The readings state that Jesus' mission was to be a "light to the nations" and conquer darkness with sacrificial love. The Church exists to fulfill this mission, and all baptized people share in it.
Sacrificial Love	The method by which Jesus conquered darkness. It is the act of giving oneself away for others and forgiving without counting the cost, which is central to the Christian mission.
Sanctified	To be made holy or sacred to God. According to St. Paul, believers are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" through baptism.
Son of God	The ultimate testimony to Jesus' identity, confirmed by John the Baptist after seeing the Spirit descend and remain upon him.
True Freedom	Found only in Christ, it is defined not as freedom <i>from</i> others or the ability to do whatever one wants, but as freedom <i>for</i> others, expressed through loving and serving without fear.