

## **5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### **God's call and our unworthiness**

All of us are frail creatures. We all struggle with our sinfulness and brokenness.

More often, the consciousness of our imperfections and limitations creates a deep sense of unworthiness and inadequacies within us. The feelings of shortcomings and unworthiness hold us back from responding to God's call to ministry.

The readings for this Sunday teach us to be open to God's call no matter how unworthy we may feel or believe ourselves to be. The readings encourage us to cooperate with God's grace and heed the call to service.

We learn from the experiences of Isaiah, Paul, and Peter how each of them responded to God's call to service despite their sinfulness and unworthiness. They all allowed the grace and mercy of God to transform them and work in their lives.

In the first reading, Isaiah acknowledged his own sinfulness and wretchedness before the holiness of God. Isaiah did not see himself worthy enough to be God's prophet or a messenger. He proclaimed: "Woe is me; I am doomed. For I am a sinful man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips". In a more spectacular way, God sent the Holy Seraph to cleanse and purify Isaiah from his sinfulness and iniquities. Isaiah responded to God's call. He declared: "Here I am, send me"

In the second reading, Paul confessed his sinfulness and unworthiness to proclaim the gospel message of God's unfailing love to the world. Paul identified himself as the least of the apostles because of his former way of life. He persecuted the church of God but after his encounter with the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus, he became a whole new person. Paul experienced the power of God's loving mercy and grace. He trusted in the words of the Lord, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2Corinthians 12:9).

In the gospel, Peter felt unworthy to come into Jesus's presence. Peter and his companions went fishing and they worked all night without catching a single fish. These folks were disappointed and despondent. They were washing their nets and preparing to go home. Jesus drew near to them and offered them hope. He instructed Peter and his companions to put out the nets into the deep water to catch some fish. He invited them to take a leap of faith. They did and got the great catch of fish. At this, Peter fell to his knees and said to Jesus: "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." (Luke 5:8). Jesus encouraged him, "Do not be afraid; henceforth, you will be catching men." Inspired by the miraculous catch Peter and his companions left everything and followed Jesus. All of us are called to God's service. Like Isaiah, Paul, and Peter, we too need to go beyond our fears, hopelessness and allow God's grace to heal our brokenness and sanctify us for his work.

With the psalmist, let us thank and praise God for His enduring love and kindness towards us. Let us surrender our fears and unworthiness to the Lord and so say, "Here I am, send me."

God bless,

Fr. Dr. Ben