

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C**  
**February 7, 2010**

**Readings: Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11**

**Go Now, It's a Command**

*“When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.”* We can reflect on these last words of the gospel and ask ourselves if we are willing to leave everything and follow Jesus. Or, maybe more simply, are we willing to put Jesus first in our lives?

This morning we hear testimony from Isaiah, from St. Paul, and from Simon who would later be renamed Peter, the Rock. They were all called by God. But were they particularly righteous and holy? No, but they all humbly admitted their unworthiness and their sinfulness.

Isaiah proclaimed: *“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!”*

Paul writes: *“For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”*

And Simon says to Jesus: *“Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.”*

All three men claimed to be unworthy. Yet God prepares them for the missions that He has chosen for them. He sends angels with a burning ember to purify Isaiah's unclean lips. And the angel says to him: *“See, now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged.”* Sounds a little like what Purgatory might be some day; our sins will be purged by fire so that we can be worthy to see the Lord face to face in Heaven.

St. Paul's ministry is made effective through God's grace. He writes: *“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective.”*

And Jesus speaks directly to Simon Peter: *“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”*

We are all called by God and, in our humility, God will give us the charisms, the graces, the healings to carry out the work He has planned for us. We may not be called to be a prophet like Isaiah, or a teacher and preacher like St. Paul, or a great leader in the hierarchy of the Church like St. Peter. But we are called. We are all sent each week at the end of the Mass.

I had the opportunity to assist Fr. Ben Luedtke at a conference a few weeks back. He is a very dynamic preacher with quite a conversion story and who was ordained by Pope John Paul II. He reminded the other deacon and me after Mass about our privilege and responsibility associated with the dismissal at the end of Mass. He reminded us that we should not say: *“Let us go now.”* But instead we should say: *“Go now.”* It is a command, not a pleasant request. I had to stop and think about what it is that I say at the end of Mass.

And I ask you to stop and listen and reflect at the end of Mass when you are being sent. How is God calling you to be a prophet? How is God calling you to teach and spread the Good News to others this next week? How is God calling you to be a fisher of

men's souls? And when you reflect upon these things, I'm sure many of you, in humility like Isaiah, and Paul, and Simon Peter, will say that you are not worthy or capable of being a prophet, or a teacher, or a laborer for the harvest. And so you need to ask God to purge you of your sinful desires. Ask God for His graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to give you the courage not to be afraid. God will give you what you need to carry on your role in the mission of the Church. You need to accept it in humility.

Jesus tells us to pick up our cross and follow Him. It is not a request or a suggestion, it is a command. And God has a job for every one of us to do toward the goal of building up the Church. At the end of Mass I will say: "***Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.***" It is not a request or a suggestion, it is a command. How will you love and serve the Lord this next week?

**Deacon Joe Hulway**