

Do Not Fear Because of Your Unworthiness

Is. 6: 1-2a, 3-8; Ps. 138; 1 Cor. 15: 1-11; Lk. 5: 1-11

If we came into the presence of God, it is likely that each of us would feel inadequate and unworthy. And so, perhaps it is good that God will always remain hidden from us while we live in this world. In fact, Scripture tells us that we cannot look upon the face of God and live.

In the Scripture readings for this Sunday, we encounter three examples of people who felt unworthy in the presence of God. Isaiah encountered God who called him to be a prophetic voice to the Israelites. Isaiah doubted that he could carry out this mission because he was 'a man of unclean lips'. But God sent an angel to absolve him of his sins to prepare him for what he had been called to do. And so Isaiah had the confidence to say: 'Here am I, send me!'

Paul felt that he was unworthy to be called an apostle even though he had worked tirelessly to build up the Church. He cited how zealously he had persecuted Christians previously. But God purified Paul and anointed him to prepare him for his apostolic work. Paul said that whatever he had accomplished was not due to his own efforts, but rather through the grace of God that was with him.

Peter, when he became aware that he was in the presence of the Messiah, immediately felt his unworthiness saying: 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' But Jesus took no notice of this and called Peter to bring souls to Him saying: 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.'

God did not dwell on the sins and failings of these men. Instead, He conferred His grace on them so that they would be able to undertake the missions for which He had called them.

There are times when we may hear God calling us to our mission. Sometimes the call may be loud and dramatic like the calling of Paul on the road to Damascus. But often, the call comes to us in a whisper; a faint stirring in our hearts. The call may be so quiet and gentle that we may not even realize that we are receiving a message from God. It is then that we must have faith and trust in Him knowing that 'God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.'

We need to have faith in God, not only when we are asking Him for something we need, but also when he calls us to 'Put out into the deep water.' We need to have faith that He will not abandon us but will always be with us to guide us and strengthen us. We need to remember to have faith that, if that gentle whisper is indeed a call from God, He will provide us with the necessary gifts to carry out our mission.

And if, like Isaiah, Paul, Peter and many other prophets that we read of in the Scriptures, we feel that we are unworthy of God's call and that we lack the required talent, we need to remember that God never calls the rich, the powerful, or the talented speakers. Instead, He calls the humble; people that would appear to lack the gifts necessary for the mission that God has entrusted to them.

Have faith. Trust in God. We need only to listen for His call and cooperate with Him; all for our good and His greater glory.