

Beloved in Christ, the theme that runs through the readings is **God always chooses the weak and make them strong in bearing witness to the Kingdom.** Today's readings deal with the calls of Isaiah, Paul and Peter, all three of them overwhelmed by a feeling of utter unworthiness before Holy God. The prophet Isaiah, in our first reading, has a vision of God in all God's glory. His reaction to the vision is one of awe, but also one in which he has a horrifying realization of how sinful and unworthy he is in the midst of perfect and holy God and he cries out in hopelessness: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips" (Is.6:5). Similarly, in the second reading, Paul also has a vision and his reaction to this vision is one of humility: "I am the least of the Apostles, unfit to be called an Apostle..." (1Cor.15:9). In addition, Peter also humbled himself before the Lord saying: 'Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man' (Lk.5:8).

In the first reading, Isaiah felt **unclean, humble and unworthy** in the presence of the Lord. Isaiah also saw how an angel took a live coal from the fire on the altar, and touched his lips with it. He understood that by so doing, God has cleansed him and render him fit to be His messenger. It is significant that it was the mouth that was so purified, because shortly after, God is looking for someone to be a spokesperson, a prophet, and Isaiah, in gratitude, calls out "**Here I am, Lord. send me**" (Is.6:8). The proper attitude toward forgiveness of sin is some sort of action that shows our thankfulness, our gratitude, our love for God's mercy. Like Isaiah, Paul also has a vision of such glory that causes him to recognize his sinfulness and to feel great guilt over it. Throughout his life, Paul built up his spiritual life upon two pillars; namely: first, **his unworthiness** to be a messenger of the Gospel "I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle" (1Cor.15:9). Second, Paul's **completely trust in God** "by God's grace I am what I am (1Cor.15:10)

Unlike Isaiah and Paul, Simon Peter, had a different call experience. After they had fished all night and were not catching anything. They decided to give up and come to shore to clean their boats and their nets, so they would be ready when they went out again. When Jesus asks the men to put one of the boats back into the water, Simon agrees, presumably because Jesus wanted to preach to those on the shoreline, which he did. But, after he had finished preaching, Jesus told Simon to go a little deeper and lower his nets again. Simon is deferential but tries to explain to Jesus that there were no fish around that night, that they had tried and had given up. However, since Simon Peter respected Jesus as a teacher, **he did what Jesus asked him.**

The result was miraculous. The nets were breaking with fish, so much so that they took out the second boat and also filled it with fish, so that the boat was in danger of collapsing. Here is where the three stories converge, however. The result of this miracle for Simon Peter was to make him realize his sinfulness in the presence of such a miracle-worker and teacher. He feels, like Isiah and Paul, both sinful and guilty. Jesus calms Simon and the others simply by saying "**Do not be afraid from now on you will be fishers of men**" (Lk.5:10). After they had been relieved of their guilt, their reaction was the same as Isaiah and Paul, they brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus." We are also called to leave everything and follow Jesus.

Finally, dear friends, the assessment of Isaiah and the Apostles gives us hope, because if they could accomplish great things for the Lord in their imperfections, why cannot we? Through our baptism and confirmation, each one of us is called by the Lord to be his witnesses. **The apostle's weaknesses were so obvious as we read the Scripture, yet Jesus knew their hearts and their potential and knew their love for God. Jesus knows our potential and what we can do for his kingdom. Let us not relent and answer God's call and try to make a difference in the world. Let us pray in this Mass for grace to overcome our human weakness and to spread the Good News in our way of life. Amen!**