

FIFTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

February 6, 2022 C

Facilitator: *Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask Him to help us to hear the word He wants us to hear this week.*

Pause for a moment and then play a religious song.

Opening prayer: *Thank you, Lord, for gathering us together to share our lives and your holy Word. Anoint us with your Holy Spirit so that each of us may hear the word you want us to hear. Unworthy though we are, may we, like Isaiah, Paul and Peter, say 'Yes' to your call and never be afraid to launch out into the deep. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Response to last week's word: [Facilitator briefly recalls last week's Gospel.] *Let us spend a few minutes sharing how the Word we heard God speak to us last week has unfolded in our lives during the week.*

Facilitator reads focus statement: There is a clear theme of vocation in all three readings. Notice how Isaiah, Paul and Peter all feel unworthy to be chosen by God to be his agents in the world. In the second reading, Paul, like Isaiah states his unworthiness to preach God's word.

Let us listen to God's word to hear what it is He wants to say to us in these readings today. As you hear a word, you may want to underline it or write it down to remember.

Read the First Reading, the Psalm and the Second Reading, pausing briefly after each one.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

Isaiah shares with us how God calls him to the prophetic ministry during a liturgical celebration in the Temple. We notice three movements: 1) the *theophany* (God's appearance to Isaiah); 2) Isaiah's *purification*; and 3) his 'Yes' to God's call. In the theophany, God discloses himself as Most Holy ("*Holy, Holy, Holy!*"). Isaiah catches a glimpse of the awesome majesty and mystery of God. Thereupon, Isaiah becomes aware of his sinfulness and unworthiness before God, and concedes that he is as a "*man of unclean lips, living among an unclean people.*" Then God uses one of his angels to cleanse Isaiah. Purified of sin, Isaiah is now very ready to go and be God's spokesman. During his ministry, he will frequently speak of God's holiness and Israel's sinfulness.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 138

This psalm is a very appropriate response for Isaiah and us after we have experienced the awesome presence of God.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Paul reassures his readers that the Good News he shares with them is not his own creation but rather a message received from Christ himself who died and

has risen. His Resurrection was testified by many. Just like Isaiah in the first reading and Peter in the Gospel, Paul testifies to his own unworthiness to preach the Gospel. Yet, unworthy though he is, God calls him. Paul especially challenges the Corinthians to accept Jesus' Resurrection, not as someone's nice idea, but as a historical fact.

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL: Luke 5:1-11

As we listen to this first reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our minds for the content.

**A participant reads the Gospel,
then all pause to reflect.**

As we listen to this second reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us. Be aware of what draws us in and what part of the Gospel might be a challenge to embrace. You may want to underline or write down the word you hear.

GOSPEL: Luke 5:1-11

Isaiah experiences God in the Temple; Paul meets Jesus on the road to Damascus; and Peter encounters him at his place of work. Jesus' presence in the boat symbolizes his presence in and with the Church. Peter's lack of success at catching fish symbolizes the "futility" of pastoral ministry without the presence and power of God. Discouragement is part and parcel

of life, but we must not let it get us down. We must keep throwing out the net. In this Gospel, Jesus is calling to himself disciples who will in turn “catch” others for Christ by the “bait” of God’s Word.

FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Share with the group or person next to you what spoke to you most in the Gospel. With this first question, try to refrain from commenting on what others said. Just share what spoke to you and then move on to the next person.
2. Isaiah, Paul and Peter felt unworthy to do God’s work. Have you ever felt like that before God? What helps you to deal with any sense of unworthiness that you may feel?
3. It has been said (and our first reading seems to bear this out) that “the closer we get to God, the more we will be aware of our sinfulness.” Comment.
4. Most Catholics have a deep resistance to “catching others” for Christ. How can we help each other to overcome this resistance? If you have a story to tell in this area, share it.
5. What is one thing you must walk away from to more closely follow Jesus?
6. What is the one thing Jesus is saying to us in this Sunday’s Gospel about how a disciple should speak or act?

JOURNALING: *Having listened to God’s word and listened to others reflections on it, take a quiet moment to reflect on what you are hearing God say to you. Your response will be what you bring to Eucharist on Sunday, asking Jesus to help you respond as He asks of you. When ready, jot down your reflections.*

PRAYING WITH THE WORD

Let us now pause to see how something(s) said in the reading might lead us into shared prayer. Suggestions: “Dear Jesus, in each and every moment, in every encounter with others, you call me to be who you created me to be. Please help me to hear and respond more fully – Yes!” “Please remove my fears of unworthiness and inadequacy that prevent or impede my complete consent.”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Name one way you can act on today’s readings. Suggestions: Think of one person you may be able to invite back to church or to get closer to Christ. Begin to pray for this person. When the time seems right, invite the person to church or to join your small group.

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, PETITION AND INTERCESSION.

FACILITATOR: What are we grateful for? For what and for whom do we wish to pray? Suggestion: Pray for all those who feel unworthy of acceptance and love.

CLOSING PRAYER (together)

O Holy God, we pray that we may be open to recognizing your holy presence wherever and however you show yourself to us. Do not let fear of our unworthiness prevent us from responding to your invitation to serve you in whatever way you ask.