

5th Sunday per Annum - C
Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8;
I Corinthians 15:1-11;
Luke 5:1-11
Little Flower - 2/9/25

My Brothers and Sisters,

Our readings today tell the story of God's call to five individuals: the Prophet Isaiah and the apostles Peter, James, John, and Paul. Today's readings, then, are an invitation to reflect on our vocation. Some people assume that God calls men and women to priesthood or religious life in some extraordinary or dramatic way. It just does not happen that way.

We believe that God knows, loves, and calls each of us by name. It is an axiom of Catholic theology that every gift from God implies a call. Therefore, God's call is embedded in the unique person each of us is, which is God's first gift to us. The unique person each of us is, is shaped by so many factors: our genetic inheritance, including gifts, talents, and limitations, our environment, especially our families, and our personality, values, character, and choices. To hear God's call, then, we first have to know ourselves. Second, to hear God's call, we have to look and listen with eyes and ears of faith. Everything we see and hear and experience is an opportunity given to us by God to hear and respond to God's call in our lives.

We also believe that God's call to us is a multi-dimensional call. First, God calls us always and everywhere to live fully human, fully Christian lives, i.e., lives lived in the *image and likeness of God*, lives lived as sons and daughters of God. Our big challenge is balancing our relationships with God, others, the world, and ourselves.

Second, God calls each of us to a way of life, a way of being and living in the world—married, single, religious or priest. Fidelity to the way of life we have chosen is the big challenge today. To remain faithful, we have to choose and re-choose our way of life each and every day.

Third, God calls each of us to place our gifts and talents in the service of God and others—our work or career, what we do. Students need to understand that their work or job is school, which prepares them for adulthood. Adolescents and young adults often have to struggle to discern what God is calling them to do in their lives after they leave school. As the years pass, our struggle is to continue to find meaning in our work or career, i.e., to see how what we do is making a real contribution to human good. Older people need to know that God is calling them to share their wisdom, experience, and time.

Finally, God calls us in every decision and choice of our lives. To hear God's call, character, or lived principles, is critical. This is why raising young people is not primarily about education but formation.

My brothers and sisters, today's readings offer us insights into the vocations of prophet or apostle, vocations each of us shares by our baptism and confirmation. First, Isaiah, Peter, and Paul recognized their sinfulness and need for God's forgiveness. To be an apostle of Jesus, we have to recognize our sinfulness and need for God's forgiveness. Second, Paul wrote, "by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace to me has not been ineffective." It was by Jesus' power that Peter, James, and John were to become fishers of men and women. To be an apostle of Jesus, we have to be open to God's grace within us. We have to let God work in and through us. Finally, Paul wrote that he handed on what he had received. In other words, true apostles of Jesus are first disciples of Jesus. We have to be followers of Jesus, faithful to his teaching and way of life, if we want to be his apostles, those who are called, chosen, and sent to proclaim his Good News to all people.