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Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - 9 February 2025

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9 February 2025

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

In today's readings we hear different experiences of hearing and responding to the call of God. God calls all of us uniquely to be a blessing to our world and bring people into the loving presence of God. We are able to respond to such a call despite our weaknesses and limitations through the grace of God.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you forgive us and bring us a new life. Lord, have mercy.

You came to give salvation to all humankind. Christ, have mercy.

You are the new Temple of God. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection.

The heart of this Sunday's collect is the petition that God, in devoted loving kindness, continually guard, protect and strengthen the community. The request is made out of the belief that the faithful are members of God's family. In this we belong to the divine household both as adopted children and as servants, implying a deep intimacy with God and a willingness to serve. The divine guardianship is an expression of God's intimate devotion to us as the head of the household and, as such, carries the expectation that God will protect us.

The ancient manuscripts show the prayer was used early in the year, either in proximity to Lent or as a Lenten collect. This association highlights the helplessness the prayer expresses in face of sin. The only sure hope is reliance on heavenly grace.

The combination of God's 'care', custodianship and protection point to the intimacy with which God relates to the faithful. Further, these are associated in the prayer tradition with God's guarding, protecting, cherishing, ruling, defending and strengthening. The collect is insistent that the family of God needs these gifts continually.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Isaiah 6:1-8

'*Holy holy holy* is the Lord!' – a wonderful declaration of the perfection and glory of the Lord. But God does not simply rest in this holiness but extends it to Isaiah despite the great prophet's misgivings.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 137:1-5. 7-8. R̥ v. 1

In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.

The psalm celebrates the dependability of the Lord who always responds to our calls for salvation.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

This reading recounts one of the earliest proclamations of the good news of Jesus' death and Resurrection. Paul states that he has passed on what has been handed on to him – not because he is perfectly worthy but, rather, through the grace of God.

Gospel Reading

Luke 5:1-11

Jesus encounters Simon Peter and his fellow fishermen on a particularly fruitless night of fishing. Jesus is calling them to follow him. A miraculous catch acts as a sign of what is possible in responding positively to Jesus. Trusting in Jesus, Simon Peter and the other disciples will find their true calling – a life of flourishing abundance.

Reflection

I have a teenage nephew who is currently going through a process of deciding what subjects he will do in his later years of high school. He has a goal in mind involving a relatively tough university level course in specialised astrophysics. My nephew has always loved this particular field of science. His calling seems to be pondering the majesty of the universe through such studies. Naturally, such a course has very specific entry requirements. All of his current grades and studies indicate that he is quite capable of such studies except for one subject. As crunch time in deciding subjects and needing to have a certain level of pre-requisites becomes more real, I've found a certain despondence coming into my nephew's disposition; 'maybe I

can't study astrophysics, maybe I should just do something else ... I think I'm simply not good enough'.

Likely the details will be different, but such an experience would not be uncommonly found either in oneself or in those around us. We feel a call, an excitement to do something or to be someone but, for whatever reason, we also become aware of obstacles that might be in our way – more specifically of obstacles found in ourselves. Our feelings of excitement can easily turn to a fear of 'not being good enough'. It is as if the light of the perceived goal or calling in life turns from a form of motivation to one of fear. Something of this very human phenomenon is captured in our readings this week.

The first reading recounts the call of Isaiah, one of the great prophets of the People of God and a significant influence on the later ministry of Jesus and the Christian faith. Today's reading presents wonderful metaphorical imagery of God's will and presence being made known to Isaiah. It features a call for a prophet which Isaiah feels compelled to answer, but he senses that there is no way he is up to the task. How can Isaiah proclaim God's holy saving word to Isaiah's kinfolk, he doesn't feel even remotely worthy to be in God's presence let alone proclaim the Lord's words. 'Woe is me!' Isaiah states, 'I am a man of unclean lips, and live among a people of unclean lips'.

The notion of lips here is symbolic imagery. It is drawing on the scriptural concept where the lips reveal the true moral character of a person (see Matt 12:34; 15:18-19 or Prov 16:30). However, the focus on Isaiah's lips is also noteworthy because it is proclamation with these very lips that is to be Isaiah's calling. They represent both moral (goodness or lack thereof) and functional (referring to a required tool of trade for any prophet) framing of the person. The very thing that is going to be needed is the thing that is not good enough as far as Isaiah is concerned.

As such, Isaiah is not only afraid of God's presence in the mode common to First Testament theology (captured in Exodus 33:20, for example, where no one can see the entire majesty of God and live), Isaiah is also afraid of himself. He is afraid of what he is or, more accurately, what he feels he is not. He is afraid of what he feels he doesn't have or cannot do and how he is generally 'not good enough'.

Fortunately, our loving God never leaves us to our own devices but always offers God's transformative spirit and a way forward. In the theophanic imagery of the first reading, God offers healing, touching Isaiah's lips and making him 'clean'. It is thus empowered that when the question is asked 'whom shall I send?', Isaiah has moved from one of cowering fear to one who boldly responds, 'Here am I; send me!'

Turning to the Gospel reading, it is relatively early in Jesus' public ministry when Luke recounts Jesus' encounter with some of his first followers. Here too we have a calling of people to God's mission. The fishermen have worked hard through the night and it has been rather fruitless. Jesus encourages them to 'go one more time' and the miraculous catch ensues. Peter recognising what is going on and in anticipation of the calling he is about to respond to, falls to his knees and despairingly cries out that Jesus should go away 'for I am a sinful man'.

Again, there is this sense of unworthiness. What Peter is ultimately called to is coming into focus and because what one is called to is from God, it has the illumination of God with it, and it brings into focus our limitations. But the miraculous catch is a metaphor, a sign of the disciple's potential despite their limitations. Fruitlessness of their own efforts will be transformed by the call of Christ. Further, as Jesus is the one calling, there is no need to fear. In following Jesus, Peter and the other disciples will realise their true calling and will be 'catchers of people'.

Paul too, especially when the full version of the second reading is read, recognises that he is the 'least of the apostles', unworthy of the very title. But Paul provides a beautiful line in response; 'but by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain' (1 Cor 15:10).

Isaiah, Peter and Paul; in all their cases they have a sense of what they are in the face of their calling and they feel unworthy. They see a problem in who they are or what they do not have or what they cannot do. Their declaration is effectively 'I am not good enough'. But God sees them through God's eyes and the power of grace, and through such grace they ultimately can say 'I am what I am' and what 'I am' is precisely good enough because of God's presence and God's love.

As for my nephew, we don't know the extent of where his young life will lead. However, he can rest assured that if the Lord is calling him to do astrophysics or anything else for that matter, that the Lord will gently tell him to not be afraid of what he cannot do, but trust God who will lead him to an abundant grace filled life, one where the 'catch will be bursting at the seams'.



Isa 6:8

**Here am I;
send me.**

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

We have heard in the Scriptures that God transforms all things according to need. Let us then lift our needs to God with faith filled hearts.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and the leaders of our Church. May they have the courage to faithfully follow their calling in witnessing to the gospel.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of our world and of Australia. May they come to know that truth and power only come from God and that peace must be a prime objective.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all prophets who challenge us in our faith. May they be strengthened in their will to follow what God has called them to do.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all of us gathered here as people of faith. May we accept our weaknesses and failings but also open ourselves to the confidence and grace that will help each of us in our vocation.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are suffering throughout the world. May many voices continue to be raised in the world to help bring justice and peace.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who have died that they will enjoy eternal joy. We pray for those who grieve that their confidence in what God has promised will ease their pain.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

God of all prophets, we bring all these needs to you in faith that they will be heard in Jesus' name and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C (9 February 2025)

Title	AOV	AOV2	CWB	CWBII	GA
Be not afraid	114			653	449
Christ is made the sure foundation			640		482
Come down, O love divine	118		653	381	375
Do not be afraid		73		481	28
Forth in the peace of Christ we go			681	489	495
Go, make of all disciples				493	
Go now, you are sent forth			690	494	
Go to the world!				496	
God has chosen me				495	497
Here I am, Lord	90			518	496
Holy God, we praise your name		129	710	504	411
I have loved you	126			511	402
Let all mortal flesh keep silence				533	190
Lord, you give the great commission					313
O come and sing to God, the Lord				175	
Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven	78		789	588	392
Praise to the Lord, the almighty		132	792	586	421
Take the word of God with you				607	494
The Spirit of God			832		185
The summons				645	502
You walk along our shoreline				653	

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Fish with me			342
God has chosen me			345
Here I am, Lord		152	
Will you come and follow me/The summons	149	137	

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 137: *In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 137	363	pg. 62	pg. 94

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Heaven shall be yours (TCS) *Beatitudes* [Communion]