

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #75

READING I Isaiah 6:1–2a, 3–8

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

In the year **King Uzziah** died,
I saw the **Lord** seated on a **high and lofty throne**,
with the **train** of his garment **filling the temple**.
Seraphim were stationed **above**.

They **cried** one to the other,
“**Holy, holy, holy** is the **Lord** of hosts!
All the earth is **filled** with his **glory!**”
At the **sound** of that cry, the frame of the door **shook**
and the house was **filled** with **smoke**.

Then I said, “**Woe** is me, I am **doomed!**
For I am a man of **unclean lips**,
living among a **people of unclean lips**;
yet my eyes have **seen the King**, the **LORD** of **hosts!**”
Then one of the **seraphim** **flew** to me,
holding an **ember** that he had taken with tongs
from the **altar**.

He **touched** my **mouth** with it, and said,
“**See**, now that this has **touched** your **lips**,
your **wickedness** is **removed**, your **sin** **purged**.”

Then I **heard** the voice of the **Lord** saying,
“**Whom** shall I **send**? **Who** will **go** for **us**?”
“**Here I am**,” I said; “**send me!**”

Isaiah = Ī-ZAY-uh

Uzziah = yuh-ZĪ-uh. He reigned fifty-two years during a period of prosperity but was struck with leprosy for disobeying the Lord. He died in 740 BC.

Remember, you are about to narrate a unique and mystical experience.

Convey the angels' praise with energy and awe. Isaiah is awed and overwhelmed but unable to turn away.

Smoke is a biblical sign of God's presence.

Because humans are unworthy to stand before God, “seeing” God almost certainly ensured death. Isaiah's fear is real.

Let your tone suggest the remarkable nature of this event.

What is the tone of the angel: reassuring, comforting, rousing?

Pause to transition from hearing the angel to hearing God's own voice.

Try for a blend of determination and humility.

READING I

As he relates his call, the prophet Isaiah emphasizes certain elements. God calls him during a Temple liturgy. Seraphim surround the throne and celebrate God's holiness. The divine presence is symbolized by the train of the garment that fills the Temple and by the earthquake and the smoke, reminiscent of the signs of God's presence at Sinai (Exodus 19:16–19). This thrice-holy God converses with the prophet, who senses

his own unworthiness in the divine presence, but God purifies his mouth so he can convey God's word. The prophet freely volunteers for this service: “Here I am; send me.” The vocation narrative stresses the contrast between God's holiness and human smallness expressed by an astonished youth, who consents to being overwhelmed by God and receiving a mission.

READING II

The second reading is not the story of Paul's call, but rather his witness to the central belief of Christianity, the Resurrection of Christ. As he presents his testimony, the apostle states his qualifications: “the least of the Apostles,” not fit to be called an apostle. “But by the grace of God I am what I am.” God's power works through his weakness. Paul recognizes that the task of the prophet or apostle is not to announce his own mes-

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 138:1–2, 2–3, 4–5, 7–8 (1c)

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

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all
my heart,
for you have heard the words of my
mouth;
in the presence of the angels I will sing
your praise;

I will worship at your holy temple
and give thanks to your name.

Because of your kindness and your truth;
for you have made great above all things
your name and your promise.

When I called, you answered me;
you built up strength within me.

All the kings of the earth shall give thanks
to you, O LORD,
when they hear the words of your mouth;
and they shall sing of the ways of the LORD:
“Great is the glory of the LORD.”

Your right hand saves me.
The LORD will complete what he has done
for me;
your kindness, O LORD, endures forever;
forsake not the work of your hands.

READING II 1 Corinthians 15:1–11

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

I am reminding you, [brothers and sisters],
of the gospel I preached to you,
which you indeed **received** and in which you also **stand**.

Through it you are also being **saved**,
if you hold **fast** to the word I **preached** to you,
unless you **believed** in **vain**.

For [I **handed** on to you as of **first importance** what I also **received**:
that **Christ died** for our sins in accordance with the **Scriptures**;
that he was **buried**;
that he was **raised** on the **third day**
in accordance with the **Scriptures**;
that he **appeared** to **Cephas**, then to the **Twelve**.

After that, Christ appeared to **more**
than **five hundred** brothers at **once**,
most of whom are still **living**,
though some have **fallen asleep**.

Corinthians = kohr-IN-thee-uhnZ

Like Paul's community, yours has need of this reminder of the Gospel they "received" and on which they "stand." Remember, you are reminding them of "good news." Be sure you sound like it.

Nothing is automatic: We are being saved if we practice what we've been taught.

"In vain": let your tone say: You wouldn't be that foolish, would you?

Here is a review of the faith for which many have shed their blood. Make it sound that important.

This listing of appearances is meant to impress his readers.

sage, but what he has received and experienced personally. At the ground level of a person's Christian faith is not the intuition of her or his own importance, but a historical event: the death and Resurrection of Jesus, a saving event to be announced in its entirety. This is not simply the report of a past event; it has repercussions in the people's lives today: Christ appeared to Cephas, to the Twelve, then was seen by five hundred sisters and brothers . . . and to the least likely Paul himself. Christ is

manifested to every believer who is faithful to the call she or he has received. People today will believe in the Resurrection of Christ not so much on the testimony of yesterday's witnesses, as by the changed and ever-changing lives of today's witnesses.

GOSPEL

Jesus engages his disciples in the midst of their daily lives and activities at the lakeshore. At dawn, a tension is felt between the rising light and the shadows that resist saying

goodbye to the night. On one hand, the rising sun blinds the eyes and does not let us see right; on the other, the eyes are accustomed to the semidarkness. In today's first reading, the prophet Isaiah sees the splendor of the thrice-holy God and perceives his own indignity. God calls him, but he exclaims, "Woe is me! I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips." The intense light makes us aware of the shadows of our existence. Something similar happens when Jesus boards Simon's boat: there is a

Paul has already dealt with the incongruity of his past behavior. His focus is not on guilt but on saving grace.

Paul is saying: I'm "unfit" and yet "I am what I am," an apostle. The reality of what he is is greater than his unworthiness.

This might sound like arrogance were Paul not aware that even his labor was made possible by God's mercy.

The fishermen are just ending their night of work; Jesus is beginning his day of preaching.

Washing of nets signals the night's work is over.

Jesus does not ask to enter Peter's boat.

The metaphoric meaning of "into the deep" is significant.

His tone suggests, "I'm only doing this because you're asking."

miraculous catch of fish, which moves Simon to crouch at the Master's feet and say, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man"—a response that echoes Isaiah's vocation, when he, too, felt unworthy in God's presence.

Here Simon's unexpected catch and his encounter with Jesus await the Master's words: "From now on you will be a fisher of human beings." Contrary to the apparent sense, "to catch human beings" is to remove them from the sea, the symbolic

After that he appeared to **James**,
then to **all the apostles**.

Last of all, as to one born **abnormally**,
he appeared to **me**.]

For I am the **least** of the apostles,
not fit to be **called** an apostle,
because I **persecuted** the church of **God**.

But by the grace of God I am what I am,
and his **grace** to me has not been **ineffective**.

Indeed, I have **toiled harder** than **all** of them;
not I, however, but the **grace of God** that is **with me**.

[Therefore, whether it be I or **they**,
so we **preach** and so you **believed**.]

[Shorter: 1 Corinthians 15:3–8, 11 (see brackets)]

GOSPEL Luke 5:1–11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

While the **crowd** was **pressing in** on **Jesus** and **listening**
to the **word of God**,

he was standing by the **Lake of Gennesaret**.

He saw two **boats** there alongside the **lake**;

the **fishermen** had **disembarked** and were **washing their nets**.

Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to **Simon**,
he asked him to **put out** a **short distance** from the **shore**.

Then he sat **down** and **taught** the crowds from the boat.

After he had finished **speaking**, he said to **Simon**,

"Put out into **deep water** and **lower** your nets for a **catch**."

Simon said in reply,

"**Master**, we have worked hard **all night** and have
caught **nothing**,

but at **your command** I **will** lower the nets." >>

place of evil. To fish for people is to save them from the place of evil and participate in the liberating action of Jesus. There is a connection between the miraculous catch and the new identity Simon Peter acquires on his knees before Jesus. Without this encounter and the awareness of his own limitations, the individual is unproductive; in friendship with Christ, the individual becomes alive and fruitful. It was Jesus' Word that filled the nets; the same Word

gives Simon Peter his new identity and transforms his life.

Every Christian is challenged by Baptism to live for the salvation of humanity, in accord with Paul's testimony to the Corinthians: God's grace "to me has not been ineffective. Indeed, I have toiled harder than all of them; not I, however, but the grace of God that is with me." In the light of the Gospel, we ask ourselves whether our knowledge of Christ and being born anew in Baptism fit into the category