

God Calls Us First

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Is 6:1-2a.3-8)

Setting in the Temple

¹In the year King Uzziah died,* I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne,^a with the train of his garment filling the temple. ²Seraphim* were stationed above. ³“Holy, holy, holy* is the LORD of hosts!

All the earth is filled with his glory!”

^{4c}At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke.*

Fear of Isaiah

⁵Then I said, “Woe is me, I am doomed!”* For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”^d ⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷He touched my mouth with it. “See,” he said, “now that this has touched your lips,* your wickedness is removed, your sin purged.”^e

The call and response of Isaiah

⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?” “Here I am,” I said; “**send me!**”

THE FOCUS: Sending of Isaiah

COMMENTARY

- Vv.1-3 talk about the **setting** of the call of Isaiah: He sees God in the Temple, sitting on a throne, and the seraphim, singing “Holy.” Effects: sound, door shaking, smoke
- V.5 affirms the old biblical belief that to see God is to see death. It also affirms Isaiah’s sinfulness. Who is he to see the Lord?
- V.6 speaks of the purification of Isaiah through the seraph (effect: ember from the altar)



- V.7 indicates the cleansing actions of the seraph (touching mouth/lips).
- “Wickedness is removed” parallels with “sin purged.”
- V.8 indicates the voice of God with articulation (not just a voice / sound) in the form of a questions in parallel style (Whom shall I send //who will go for us?).
- Isaiah responds, “Here I am! Send me!” Did Isaiah volunteer to be a prophet?

REFLECTIONS

The text describes the call of the prophet Isaiah. God personally appears to him in the Temple.

He calls in the form of a question. God does not say: “*I am sending you*” but “*Whom shall I send?*” to which Isaiah “volunteers” (He is sensitive to the style of God. He intelligently responds to the invitation).

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(Ps 138:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 7-8)

**IN THE SIGHT OF THE ANGELS
I WILL SING YOUR PRAISES, LORD.**

SECOND READING (1 Cor 15:1-11)

Fraternal reminder of the gospel

¹* Now I am reminding you, brothers, of the **gospel I preached to you**, which you indeed received and in which you also stand.* ²Through it you are also being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³* ^aFor I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received:

The content of the gospel preaching

that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; ^{4b}that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures;

Appearances of Christ to the apostles

^{5c}that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

Appearance of Christ to Paul, his call by grace

^{8a}Last of all, as to one born abnormally, he appeared to me. ^{9e}For **I am the least* of the apostles**, not fit to be called an **apostle**, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But 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. ¹¹Therefore, whether it be I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

THE FOCUS: The Call of Paul as Apostle

COMMENTARY

- In v.1 Paul reminds the Corinthians of the gospel which he preached and which they have received and lived.
- V.2 indicates that the gospel is salvific, transmitted to them by Paul.
- Vv.3-4 is the kerygma, the content of the preaching of the apostles, of Paul. *Take note of the repetition of "in accordance with the scriptures."*
- Vv.5-7 speak of Jesus' appearances to Cephas (Peter), to 12, to more than 500 brothers, to James and to all apostles.

- V.8 speaks of Jesus' appearance to Paul who considers himself: abnormal, least of the apostles, not fit to be called apostle (v.9) because he persecuted the church of God (v.9).
- V.10 speaks of the grace working in Paul and his claim on the intensity of his work (I toiled harder).

REFLECTIONS

The Gospel preached by St. Paul must be understood in terms of St. Paul, not in terms of the four evangelists. The gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were not written yet at the time of Paul. This is the gospel preached by Paul nurtured the Christian community in Corinth and other places.

GOSPEL READING (Lk 5:1-11)

Setting: by the lake, fishing, preaching

^{1*}While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. ²He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. ³Getting 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.

Jesus and Peter

^{4c}After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." ⁵Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." ⁶When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. ⁷They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that they were in danger of sinking.

Peter and Jesus

⁸When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." ⁹For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, ^{10d}and likewise James and

John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon.

The call of Peter and his companions

Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” 11 When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

THE FOCUS: On the Call of the Apostles

COMMENTARY

- Vv.1-3 provide the setting for the call of Peter. Peter is a fisherman; owns boats and has workers. Jesus is shown as preacher, borrows the boat of Peter. Nice strategy for preaching (not to be hemmed in by the crowds).
- The people are hungry for the word of God.
- Vv.4-7 portray the power of Jesus. He asks Peter to obey him (Put out into deep water... and fish). For Peter, this is insane, but for the sake of his word, he obeys.
- Vv.8-10 portray the religious experience of Peter and his companions. They realize their sinfulness. Here takes place the call of Peter and his companions.
- V.11 speaks of the total response of Peter and companions to Jesus.

REFLECTIONS

The call of Peter is done in the context of the preaching of Jesus and in the context of fishing (hanap-buhay).

When God calls, it is step by step. *Hindi biglaan* (no haste). Notice it in Peter’s calling?

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR SHARING/HOMILY

The First Reading talks about the vocation of Isaiah. (*God appearing in glory*). The Second Reading talks something about the vocation of Paul (*Christ resurrected appearing*). The Gospel Reading talks about the vocation of Peter (*Jesus of Nazareth as a preacher*).

How to develop your homily

Share your vocation story and connect these

with the stories of Isaiah, Peter and Paul.

Those who willingly answer the call feel forgiven, cleansed (God-experience).

In our Church, there is lack of vocations because of irreligion, materialism, secularism, false values, population control, sex scandals, etc.

Modern couples (even if they are active in church) do not allow their children to enter the seminary or convent. They expect their children to be in lucrative high paying jobs.

They expect their children to become “labor commodities, fund-raisers.” They enroll at courses where there is market demand, say nursing or computer engineer, even if they can be better persons if they become doctors, teachers, accountants or religious.

Some parents send their children to the seminary, even if they have no vocation, to avail of its education and training.

The liturgy should make us rethink of our values, so that we will not be hindering the call of God or wasting the resources intended to help interested young vocations.

Vocation is not forced; it needs a personal generous response and community support. It is sown where there is fear of God; where there is love for priests and religious; where there is sincere search for God and deep prayer life.

III. OUR CONTEXT

1. CBCP working for clean, honest and peaceful elections
2. Global warming = melting of ice caps = higher water level = submersion of lowlands.
3. What are the callings of service that we hear these days?
4. Share briefly your vocation stories.

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