

## *Fifth Sunday of Year C - A Culture of Vocation*

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has declared that it is necessary to foster once more 'a culture of vocation'. He means that we should realise that God does call to each of us to play our part in the building up of God's Kingdom on earth. And in responding to that call we will find happiness in our hearts and meaning in our lives.

To precisely **what** God is calling us varies from person to person, but call God does – and we must learn to listen to God's voice if we are to make sense of our days and spend them gainfully. The Gospel today puts before us some of the stages of a spiritual vocation.

The apostles were completely pre-occupied with their everyday concerns, even though they were within earshot of Jesus voice. We can be the same: pre-occupied with what we think is important.

But Jesus spoke directly to them and made a limited appeal to their good will: a small task to undertake, a little favour to perform - to allow Him to get into their boat and to put out a little into the sea.

He will do the same for us. We may know that call in our hearts, or it may come to us in the request of someone we meet who approaches us and asks for our help. We can respond, or we can back away.

The Apostles kindly did what Jesus asked of them and were rewarded with the grace of a further request: to put out into deeper water and to put out their nets.

If, like them, we help out in the way that we have been asked to, then we too will be favoured with another grace, namely - like Peter and his companions - to begin to trust more in the directives of our Lord rather than in our own skill or experience.

Such trust will then bring us into a greater awareness of God's bounty: we will find ourselves in some way greatly enriched, as the Apostles were - in their case with an abundance of fish!

Of course, an increase in our awareness of God's love in our life also brings a heightened sense of our own sinfulness and inadequacy: our unworthiness. But God's response to our misgivings is always one of reassurance. The words most often used by Jesus in the Gospels, spoken to so many who had anxiety in their hearts for whatever reason were: *Do not be afraid.*

We are being invited to put our security in Jesus before anything, or anyone, else.

When we do so we discover that we can feel safe and sure no matter what circumstances befall us, no matter what trials and tribulations come our way. Like the Apostles we can enjoy the intimacy and reassurance of his companionship at all times, in all places, in all circumstances – fearing nothing, not even death.

Our prayer today, all of us, no matter what our age or state of life, should be that of Isaiah as related to us in the First Reading. He **trembled** before God – at God's greatness; at the demands that might be put upon him; at the sinfulness of his condition. Nonetheless Isaiah summoned up the courage and generosity to say: *Here I am, Lord, send me.*

We are each and all called at our Baptism to be agents of God's Kingdom: a Kingdom of love and justice, of holiness and peace.

On the occasion of our Confirmation that call is renewed with greater urgency and fresh power. We are challenged to build up God's Kingdom - the New Community - in our family life, in our local church and neighbourhood, in our work place, in our nation, in human society at large, today, for sake of the whole world.

At each and every Mass we are given the chance to attend on the presence of Jesus and hear his words speak in our hearts; to offer ourselves once again to be instruments of God's will, channels of God's grace.

Let us say our hearts, and sing in our song those same sentiments of the prophet: *I will go Lord, if you need me, I will hold your people in my heart.*

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