

5th Sunday per Annum - C
Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8;
I Corinthians 15:1-11;
Luke 5:1-11
Little Flower - 2/7/16

My Brothers and Sisters,

Last Sunday, we heard the call of the Prophet Jeremiah. Today we heard the call of the Prophet Isaiah. In today's Gospel, we also heard the call of the apostles Peter, James, and John.

God said to Jeremiah, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you"* [1:5]. This passage suggests that from all eternity God has a plan for each of us. When we are young, when we are old, and all the time in between, our challenge is to discern God's plan for us and then to answer God's call. I would suggest that this Lent we all try to discern what God is calling each of us to be and do here and now and what we need to change in our lives to respond fully to that call.

Isaiah had a dramatic experience of God that filled him with a sense of wonder and awe. Most of us will not have a such dramatic experience of God. However, if we believe in God, we have to believe that we are surrounded by God's presence, power, and activity. To experience that presence, power, and activity, we have to look at the world, ourselves, and others with eyes of faith, but we can only see with eyes of faith if we are reflective and prayerful.

A common theme running through these vocation stories is that Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Peter felt inadequate or unworthy. Jeremiah thought he was too young. Isaiah saw himself as unworthy. Peter saw himself as a sinner. Likewise, one of the biggest barriers to our answering God's call in our lives is our sense of inadequacy or unworthiness. We feel that we do not have the experience, the gifts, or the holiness necessary to do anything important for God. However, we know that God consistently chooses the weak and makes them strong in bearing witness to him.

Today's reading from First Corinthians contains the heart of the Gospel. First, Paul made solemn reference to Christian Tradition: *"For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received."* The word *tradition* comes from the Latin verb *tradere* which means to hand on and represents the living faith of the Church. What Paul handed on was *"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."*

It is interesting that Paul only made solemn reference to Christian Tradition twice in all his letters. Paul used similar language when he handed on the narrative of the institution of the Eucharist. Since he only made solemn reference to Christian Tradition twice, it seems to me that he put the proclamation of the institution of the Eucharist on an almost equal par with the proclamation of Jesus' death and resurrection. Therefore, we might conclude that for Paul faith in the Eucharist is almost as central to Christian faith as faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

My brothers and sisters, Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is this Wednesday. Ash Wednesday Masses and distribution of ashes will be at 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Our Lenten little black books are available at the doors of church today. Next Sunday we will be giving a small remembrance to everyone who comes to Mass. The remembrance will be a key tag with a picture of Pope Francis and the phrase "Merciful Like The Father" on one side and a quote from Pope Francis on the other side, "Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved, and forgiven."