

5th Sunday per Annum - C
Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8;
I Corinthians 15:1-11;
Luke 5:1-11
Little Flower - 2/10/13

My Brothers and Sisters,

Thanks to all who attended the Archbishop's East Deanery Mass here at Little Flower this past Tuesday. Special thanks go to all those who worked so hard to prepare and execute our Liturgy, the dinner for the Archbishop and priests of the deanery, and the reception after Mass. The contributions of many people, such as our music ministers, were visible to everyone; however, many people worked behind the scenes and were not seen at all. Although the Mass and reception were deanery efforts, much of the work, especially the behind the scenes work, fell to us as the host parish. As usual, we outdid ourselves. I am convinced that the Archbishop saw Little Flower at its best.

In last Sunday's first reading, we heard the call of the Prophet Jeremiah. In today's first reading, we hear the call of the Prophet Isaiah and in today's Gospel, we hear the call of the Apostles Peter, James, and John.

The reading from Isaiah and the Gospel reveal something of the mystery of God to us. Isaiah had a vision of God "*seated on a high and lofty throne with the train of his garment filling the temple*" and "*Seraphim stationed above*" crying out, "*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!*" Isaiah's vision reveals the transcendence of God. The transcendence of God is his radical otherness from us and all of creation. God's transcendence is what makes him unique, all knowing, all powerful, immense, and eternal. One might say it is the awesomeness of God. God's call came to Isaiah as part of Isaiah's experience of God's transcendence.

On the other hand, in today's Gospel, in Jesus' teaching and in the miraculous catch of fish, Peter, James, and John had an experience of God's immanence, i.e., God's presence, power, and activity in our world, in Jesus, the Son of God made man. All who saw Jesus, all who heard Jesus, all who were touched by Jesus, saw, heard, and were touched by God himself in human form. Today Jesus continues to be embodied in his Word, in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and in his Spirit of love. Jesus' call came to Peter, James, and John as part of their experience of God's immanence.

The other important theme in today's readings is in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. We all know Paul had a transcendent experience of Jesus on the road to Damascus, yet the Gospel he preached was not his own. Note what he says in today's reading: "*For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received.*" Just as the Old Testament prophet was God's spokesperson, the New Testament apostle proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Jesus' disciples and apostles today, we proclaim the same Gospel that the New Testament apostles preached.

My brothers and sisters, this Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Our Masses and distribution of ashes will be at 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Our reflection booklet this year is titled *Seeking God in all Things: Lenten Prayer with Thomas Merton*. Next Sunday we will be giving a small remembrance to everyone who comes to Mass. The remembrance will have "Seeking God in all Things" with a picture of the crucified Christ on the front and Isaiah 55:6 on the back: "*Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.*" This Lent, as we seek God in all things, we want to experience our transcendent and immanent God more profoundly and to have our lives transformed by our experience of God as the lives of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Peter, James, John, and Paul were transformed by their experience of God.