

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday per Annum - C  
Isaiah 67:1-2a, 3-8;  
I Corinthians 1 5:3-8, 11;  
Luke 5:1-11  
Little Flower - 2/6/22

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today's readings suggest several themes.

The first theme concerns the nature of God and our experience of God. In today's first reading, Isaiah had a vision of God "*seated on a high and lofty throne*" 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. Today we express our experience of God's transcendence in adoration and praise.

On the other hand, in today's Gospel, in Jesus' teaching and in the miraculous catch of fish, Peter had an experience of God's immanence, i.e., God's presence, power, and activity in Jesus, the Son of God who became one of us and lived among us. 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 immanent or embodied in his Word, in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and in his Spirit of love. We can also experience both God's transcendence and immanence in creation, in personal and interpersonal experience, and in our experience of community.

However, last Sunday, in his *Angelus* message, Pope Francis addressed our experience of God in Jesus:

He is not found by those who seek miracles... by those who seek new sensations, intimate experiences, strange things; those who seek a faith made up of power and external signs. .... Jesus asks you to accept him in the daily reality that you live; in the Church of today, as it is; in those who are close to you every day; in the reality of those in need, in the problems of your family, in your parents, in your children, in grandparents, in welcoming God there.

Vocation is another theme in today's readings. God's call came to Isaiah as part of Isaiah's experience of God's transcendence. Jesus' call came to Peter, James, and John as part of their experience of God's immanence in Jesus. After their experience of God, both Isaiah and Peter felt sinful and unworthy. However, God did not find them unworthy and chose Isaiah to be a prophet and Peter, together with James and John, to be fishers of men. We often do not believe that God would call us because we believe we are sinful and unworthy. We feel that we do not have the experience, the gifts, or the holiness necessary to do anything important for God. However, 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.*"

My brothers and sisters, 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.