

Homily > OT V © > Feb 9, 2025 > A Proper Responding to God's Call

Today's Scripture readings present us with profound lessons about recognizing and responding to God's call. The call to discipleship is not something abstract; it is a life-changing encounter with the Holy Presence of God. Through the stories of Isaiah, St. Paul, and St. Peter, we see how God chooses His instruments in surprising ways, often asking them to respond with humility and a willingness to be transformed by His grace.

In the first reading, we hear from the prophet Isaiah, who, when confronted with the overwhelming holiness of God, cries out, "Woe is me! I am doomed! for I am a man of unclean lips." Isaiah, like St. Peter in today's Gospel, is keenly aware of his unworthiness. Yet, it is in this very moment of recognizing his sinfulness that God calls him to be His prophet. Isaiah's humble response to God's call is not out of strength, but out of trust in God's mercy and grace.

Similarly, St. Peter, after experiencing the miraculous catch of fish, realizes his sinfulness and unworthiness before Jesus. He falls to his knees and says, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." But Jesus, in His infinite mercy, reassures Peter, saying, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." This moment marks the beginning of Peter's journey as a disciple, one who will later go on to be the rock on which the Church is built.

We also hear in the second reading from St. Paul, who reflects on his own unworthiness as an apostle, considering his past life as a persecutor of Christians. Yet, Paul testifies that he is what he is by the grace of God, and it is by that grace that he now labors to spread the Gospel.

These three men—Isaiah, Paul, and Peter—are all keenly aware of their limitations, their sinfulness, and their unworthiness. But it is through these very realizations that they are prepared to serve God in powerful ways. God does not call the perfect; He calls those who recognize their need for His grace and are willing to follow Him.

This is a call that is not just for Isaiah, Paul, or Peter, but for all of us. Through our Baptism, we are all called to Christ's ministry. The Second Vatican Council teaches us that each of us has a unique vocation, whether as parents, priests, religious, or laypeople. Our call to discipleship may not always involve dramatic moments like those of Isaiah or Peter, but it is no less important. God has a mission for each of us, and He invites us to respond in faith, trust, and humility.

So, how do we respond to God's call today?

First, we must pray for the grace to recognize the holiness of God in our lives. Just as Isaiah and Peter were deeply moved by their encounters with God, we too are invited to experience His presence in our daily lives. We need to acknowledge our sinfulness, repent, and accept God's call with humble hearts.

Second, we are called to practice reverence for God. Just as we show respect to the Lord in our churches through genuflecting or bowing, we must also show reverence in our hearts. When we enter the church, let us remember that Jesus is truly present in the Tabernacle, and our gestures of respect should reflect our awareness of His Holiness. We can also honor God's Word by keeping

the Bible in a place of reverence in our homes and treating it as a living testament of His love and guidance.

Finally, true reverence for God leads to reverent love for our neighbors. God dwells in each one of us, and when we treat others with respect, kindness, and mercy, we acknowledge His presence within them. Each of us has a unique call and mission in the Church, and it is by joyfully serving God and others that we fulfill this call. Whether we are parents, teachers, doctors, or parishioners, our daily lives are an opportunity to live out the mission God has entrusted to us.

Today's readings challenge us to reflect on our own call to discipleship. Just like Isaiah, Paul, and Peter, we are all called to serve God in different ways. May we respond with humility, recognizing our dependence on God's grace, and may we embrace the mission He has given us with faith and love.

Let us pray that through our encounters with God's holiness, we may be transformed, and like those chosen before us, be ready to say, "Here I am, Lord, send me."