

Fifth Sunday Ordinary Time

February 7, 2010

Homily by Fr. Robert

Our first Reading describes the theophany experienced by the Prophet Isaiah. Having experienced the grandeur of this vision his immediate reaction was: "Woe is me, I am doomed!" For I am a man of unclean lips, living among people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then his wickedness was removed and his sin purged. He was prepared to hear the voice of the Lord and he did. He heard the Lord saying, "Who should I send? Who will go for us?" Without hesitation Isaiah responds, "Here I am; send me!"

We have a similar scenario in our Gospel only the theophany is not so dramatic; it is more mundane. Jesus, is preaching to the people from Peter's boat. When finished he tells Peter to put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch. Peter and his companions were seasoned fishermen. They were well aware that this was the wrong time of the day for fishing. They had labored all night and caught nothing. Still, at Jesus' word, they let down the nets and caught such a great number of fish that they filled two boats to almost the sinking point. Peter was amazed at the miracle and sees in Christ more than a mere man. He fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." Astonishment at the catch seized him and those with him. Jesus said, "Do not be afraid, from now on you will be catching men." Peter left everything and followed Him.

Peter responded to the call of Jesus with the same rapidity as Isaiah responded to his call. Both followed their call and remained faithful to it until death. According to a legend, Isaiah was sawed in half in the region of Manasseh and Peter was crucified upside down. However, John McKenzie does not put any stock in either of these legends. But, really the manner of death is beside the point; the point is that they remained faithful to the end.

God, too, like Isaiah and Peter has called us. Each of us will respond to our call in a different way because we are so different. However, we respond, may it be with the same alacrity as Isaiah and Peter responded to theirs. We have been called to Hallow our Father's name, to let his kingdom come in us and proclaim it to others, and to do God's will. We are called to walk in the light of God's face, which light is Jesus Christ and His Gospel. We are called to find our joy everyday in his name and to make the wonder of his Uncreated Being, the source of our bliss, even now in faith.

We are called, using the words of St. Francis of Assisi

To be instruments of his peace so that

- when there is hatred...we sow love
- when there is doubt...we sow faith
- when there is despair...we sow hope
- when there is darkness...we sow light
- when there is sadness...we sow joy.

We are called

- to console one another...rather than be consoled,
- to understand...rather than be understood,
- to love...rather than be loved.

In a word, we are called to live no longer for ourselves but for Him, who died for us. In doing this we will like Isaiah and Peter fulfill our call of living for the praise of His glory-the ultimate call for each of God's creatures.