

EPIPHANY 5 – 2022

Isaiah 6:1-6

1Cor 15:1-11

Lk 5:1-11

In the past some professions were described as vocations, that is, people were considered to be called to them because of the nature of the work. Nowadays in some Christian circles, the ordained ministry is considered to be a job, not a vocation. But in Scripture, God called those he chose to fulfill a ministry and when they responded positively, he commissioned them to a particular task.

In the year that king Uzziah died, Isaiah had a vision of God's majestic splendour in the Temple. God was lifted up high but his cloak reached to the ground. Angels stood above him singing of his glory. Isaiah recognised the contrast between God's perfection and his own sinfulness. His only possible response was to fall down and worship. He received God's forgiveness and when God asked, "Who will go for us to this rebellious nation?", Isaiah responded, "Here am I, send me."

The gospel reading is the commissioning of Peter to the vocation of catching people rather than fish. Jesus had been teaching by the lakeside after which he told Peter to do something ridiculous. As an experienced fisherman Peter and his friends had been out all night and caught nothing, so he was not impressed when a carpenter from Nazareth told him how to fish. In the end Peter obeyed. If he hadn't, a haul of fish would not have been caught and he would not have fallen on his knees, acknowledged his sinfulness and declared Jesus as Lord. Like Isaiah he was told not to be afraid. Jesus commissioned him into God's service, which as we know did not turn out to be a bed of roses.

St Paul justifies his commissioning as an apostle because he encountered the Risen Jesus on the Road to Damascus. He too changed from being a persecutor of the Church to being the apostolic evangelist to the Gentiles. Note this though, St Paul encountered members of the Church *before* he encountered the Risen Jesus. This is a common today because people want to connect with the Church before they commit to discipleship.

Today's readings draw our attention to God's majesty, mercy and the power of his love, which is of course opposite to the power of control. God continues to love us and calls us to love and serve him even though we may consider ourselves to be unworthy. Isaiah, Peter and Paul did not discuss the terms of service they would accept from God. They didn't demand a job description that they could sign off on. Neither were they obsessed with outcomes. Instead, they committed themselves to the service of God which was revealed to them one step at a time.

The trouble with us humans is that we want to know what is involved in anything we are invited to do before we are prepared to commit ourselves. Perhaps this explains why many young adults don't know what they want to do in their lives and why they shy away from commitment to work, relationships and membership of any group that isn't virtual.

We have to say, 'Yes' to God before he reveals what he asks of us. We were called to the vocation of discipleship and evangelism at our baptism. Jesus was called and empowered to his ministry at his baptism and it is a mistake to think that Jesus had a complete picture of his ministry at that point. This is why he was driven into the wilderness to discern how he would proceed. We must discern what God is calling us to in the same way as Jesus did, namely through prayer, reflecting on Scripture, spending time silently waiting on God with open ears and hearts and at the same time getting on with the Church's mission and life in general.

Jesus said many things that did not make sense. He also asked many people to do things that did not make sense. He still does but look what happened to those who were courageous enough to say, "Here I am, Lord, send me." You wouldn't be here today if someone hadn't said, "Yes" to God.

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Feb 2022