

5th Ordinary Sunday
February 6, 2022
“Becoming Less Unworthy”

Is 6:1...8
1 Cor 15:1-11
Lk 5:1-11

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Like it or not, we are all products of our particular culture and age. We carry in our lives the “DNA” of our locale, our families, and our lifestyle. Our background is inescapable, and it will always be with us in some way or another.

Some of our background influences have been good – Some have been not so good – or even very bad. Moreover, we carry with us the failures, the mistakes, the sins, and the crimes of our past – Because we have all done things which were wrong –

- things which we later regret –
- things we can do little to rectify.

But then there is an awakening. Somehow we see the truth about ourselves and our past. It is then that we understand that we are called to be different. We are called to make amends – to make up for what we have perpetrated. Moreover, we are called to do this in what is an unusual – and never before thought of – way!

However, at this point, we can demur. We can use our past to plead our inability to take on a new, and even noble, task. But we will be in good company – as the scriptures for today point out to us. For our awakening is the result of God’s grace. And that task is to change things for the better.

Isaiah was a sinful man – living in a nation and a culture of sinful people. Yet, God called him to do something that was truly great. When Isaiah protested, God sent an angel to purge him of his uncleanness. Isaiah, then, took on the commission given to him by God. It was to urge the nation to change – to convert their hearts – to turn away from their pagan ways – to serve and worship only the One, True, God!

Peter and the members of the Zebedee Fishing Company were no different than anyone else in Galilee. They were rough, hardworking fishermen. No doubt, they were a mixture of good and bad, just as we are.

However, they stopped their net-washing and did a favor for the new, wandering Rabbi. They listened to his words. And then they “humored” him. They did something that they were certain would be futile and a waste of time. They put out into deeper water and lowered their nets.

The result was astounding – There were so many fish that the haul almost sank both boats! Peter was overwhelmed. He declared his sinfulness and told Jesus he did not belong in his presence. Nevertheless, Jesus countered by calling Peter and his fishing partners to a new kind of spiritual fishing. So they left everything behind for the others and they followed Jesus!

This, of course, is one of the big challenges of becoming different than what we were formerly. We must leave some things behind. We can’t live the way we lived in the past. Patterns of behavior must change. Ways of thinking must change. We, truly, can become different. We can become a positive statement – or witness – for what is good and best. Furthermore, St. Paul tells us how and why we can do this in his First Letter to the Corinthians.

Jesus was and is the Son of God who came into our world. He came so that we could have eternal life. He took upon himself all of our sinfulness and died for that sinfulness. Then he rose from the dead. He appeared to many in order to prove that he was alive.

Moreover, Jesus calls each of us to be his disciples in our own particular way. We are each called to influence those around us for the better.

Certainly, like Paul, like Peter, like the brothers Zebedee, like Isaiah: we are unworthy. However, God’s grace – brought to us through Jesus – can make us less unworthy! We can be better than we are. We can even be more than we ever dreamed we could be. This is despite all those things of the past that we, now, regret and wish never happened.

And so, Brothers and Sisters, let us pray for openness to the words of Jesus and the voice of God in our hearts – May we listen attentively when those voices speak – And may we always respond, with all of our heart – even though we know we are unworthy!

Amen.

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Msgr. Russell G. Terra