



Contributed by Father Ray Reitzel, C.R.

Fr. Ray was born in Waterloo and is #9 in a family of 9 boys and 3 girls. One brother (Harry) is a C.R. priest, and two sisters are Notre Dame Sisters. He taught for 31 years at St. Jerome's H.S, in Kitchener, and at St. Joseph- Scollard Hall in North Bay. Then he served in 4 parishes for 17 years. He is now semi-retired and living at Resurrection Manor, in Waterloo, a residence for retired CRs.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 6, 2022 (Year C)

GATHERING TIME *(10-15 Minutes)*

Introduction to the Word:

All three readings dwell on the topic of people who are called to be an **evangelist (Prophet)**, one who delivers the Gospel, the Good News [God-spell in Old English] of Jesus Christ to the world. I recall the great evangelists of the 50s and 60s: Pope Pius XII, Bishop Sheen, Billy Graham, Martin Luther King, Jr., ... later, Pope John Paul II,...; the early Missionaries who risked their lives to bring the Gospel to the whole world; movies that recount these histories: Mary's appearances at Lourdes, Fatima, Guadalupe,...Brother Son, Sister Moon (St Francis), St Damian, the leper priest, Jesus of Nazareth (a classic),...these are all on Youtube. Then there are today's Evangelists: Bishop Robert Barron, Mother Teresa, our Pope, Bishops, Pastors, Deacons, all the baptized ... at baptism, we are anointed Priest, **Prophet**, and King. A prophet is one who "speaks the Word of God".

All the Prophets above, at one time felt inadequate to carry on such a mission. Who is worthy to speak the Word of God? No one! It is through our weaknesses that we learn to put our complete dependence on God, and allow the Holy Spirit to touch our minds and hearts.

We see this in the three readings of today. Those who are called go through a special manifestation from God, and readily carry out their mission. Thankfully the disciples were not as crazy as they might at first appear. However, there was clearly an attractiveness to Jesus that caused the disciples to feel free enough to follow Him. The disciples must have seen the possibilities that were before them if they were to follow Jesus – that Jesus would "give" to them all they ever wanted or desired from life. For the first disciples, it was more than the amazing catch of fish, even though the catch clearly convinced them. It was, in fact, the person of Jesus who drew the disciples from their current life as fishermen, into an unknown life with Him.

We continue to be inspired by the response of the disciples concerning their call to follow Jesus. We should reaffirm our call from our Baptism, when we were anointed Priest, **Prophet**, and King. We too can evangelize others by bringing Christ, and the Word of God, to them.

Warm-up Activity *(about 8-10 minutes)*

When you hear others speak about a call from God, what does that stir within you? What does it mean to you? Does everyone receive a call from God? How do you know if the call is genuine, truly from God? Who can help you understand and discern a call from God? Discuss.

The Table of the Word

Theme

Our Call as Christians: a Call to Serve

The call described today is more than a summons to faith; it is a call to ministry. Isaiah is called in order to be sent; the fishermen are called in order to gather others to Jesus. So, it is with us. Our call is not merely to a life of personal holiness lived in union with God. As important as this is, we are called by God *to be sent* into the world. Furthermore, our encounter with God is not a private affair. It is a communal responsibility, just as faith is essentially a communal process. All people belong to the People of God, but many are not aware of this; we are members of the Body of Christ. The faith has been handed on to us and we, in turn, are meant to hand it on to others, to let them become aware that they are God's children, and are loved by God.

We learn much about *how ministry works* from the apostles—Galilean fishermen who were plying their trade on Lake Gennesaret (the Sea of Galilee). We learn that people are inspired in places and through events that are usually quite ordinary. What is remarkable is what they experience in these places and in these events. For instance, Isaiah says he was personally *transformed* so that he could proclaim God's Word. Peter and the apostles were granted *the courage* they needed to bring others into their company. Paul was infused with God's grace (God's life). Today's pertinent question: **What are we being called to be, and to do? What do we need to do to allow God to work within us to accomplish this call?**

Leader: The Lord Jesus calls each of us to discipleship, to come follow Him, and proclaim the good news of our salvation.

Lord Jesus, for the times we have been deaf to your call to follow you,	Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, for the times we have allowed fear to stop us from following you,	Christ, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, for the times we have not proclaimed your good news of salvation,	Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray (together)

*Lord God, all-holy One, you came among us in Jesus, who taught the fishermen,
and invited them to follow Him, and become His disciples, His friends.*

*Place on our lips this good news of salvation, and in our hearts,
a welcome from which no one is excluded.*

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

*As Christians we believe that the **WORD** of God we hear proclaimed each Sunday is an empowering word, and that God is present in the word proclaimed. This is the word that God wants us to hear today. The dynamic of the small Christian community, namely, reflecting on our life story within the context of this word, and sharing the insights of these reflections, is such that God's Spirit becomes present, and the gifts of the Spirit are experienced as empowering and life giving.*

FIRST READING (Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8)

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.

And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (1 Corinthians 15:1-11)

I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand. This is the good news through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you – unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

Then he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the Apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of Apostles, unfit to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of the Apostles – though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (Luke 5:1-11)

While Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out on them and were washing their nets.

Jesus got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets. “When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” For Simon Peter and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.”

When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Lectio Divina means “sacred prayer through sacred reading.” It was a popular form of prayer in the early Church. This word proclaimed today is God's own word, God's way of speaking to you today through God's own Spirit. So take a few moments to be quiet, allowing this word you have just heard, to touch you or soak into you as you reflect quietly on the three readings. Is there a word or thought that somehow attracts you or has your interest? If so, simply identify it and describe it in a few words.

COMMENTARY:

Isaiah. Both this reading from Isaiah and Luke's gospel today address **call and response** – and both accounts are very similar in many ways. In the Book of Isaiah, Isaiah has the vision of seraphs [supernatural beings], with one calling out, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.

And Isaiah said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!” His lips and heart were purified, and he readily answered the Call.

First Corinthians. Here we have Paul, the Prophet in action.

You might recall the conversion of Paul. He pursued the Christians, jailed them and stoned them to death. Then out of the blue, the risen Christ appears to Paul and asks him, “Saul, Saul, {later Paul} why are you persecuting Me?” Paul asked, “What do you mean?”

Jesus said, “In persecuting the Christians, you are persecuting me!” This led to Paul’s conversion,

The reading today is a letter Paul writes to the community in Corinth following his eighteen-month stay with them. In typical Pauline fashion, Paul begins by affirming the people of Corinth for the way in which they received the message of the Good News. However, it would appear Paul may be concerned that some people of Corinth do not yet fully understand all the aspects of the Good News they received. In response to this, Paul spends time repeating some of what he had taught them. We would do well to reflect upon this reading as a reminder of what we hold of value in our lives of faith: Christ died for our sins; He was buried; He rose on the third day; and He appeared in resurrected form to many followers.

Luke. Today we hear the call of the first Apostles, men who are perhaps best described as simple, ordinary people. These first disciples were not of noble birth, not from financially well-off families, nor did they have any real social status of any kind – they were labourers, fishermen, more rightly referred to as peasants as opposed to nobles; not very qualified to speak out as a “Prophet”. If we take the approach that every decision Jesus made (including who He called to be Apostles) was thought out and made with purpose, then we must ask why Jesus would call these simple ordinary men? Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to first make clear that referring to the disciples as “simple” is not intended as a criticism. I would like to believe Jesus called these men, because of their personal qualities, because of their potential to be effective disciples. These were men who we could describe as people of good heart, men who knew how to work long and hard, men who would have compassion for those who struggled to survive, men who cared for others, men with willing spirits, men willing to respond immediately to the call from Jesus, and so on. If this made them “simple” men, then this is a good thing. On top of all this, they also had a certain level of “freedom” to respond to the call; they were not encumbered by wealth or social conventions – in other words, they were available.

When the disciples witnessed Jesus’ miracle of the huge catch of fish, they were astounded. Since they were already disciples of St. John the Baptist, they were ready to accept this invitation of Jesus, the Messiah, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.”

When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus. Knowing their own weaknesses, they had open minds and open hearts ready to absorb the words of Jesus. Jesus promised them that he would send them the Holy Spirit, who would remind them of all the things that Jesus had taught them.” They graduated on Pentecost Sunday.

(Allow 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

“The whole earth is full of God’s glory”

The response of Isaiah to the call from God to be a prophet, while appearing to be instant and without reluctance, was in fact based on a significant amount of time where Isaiah witnessed the glory of God. There was a pre-existing relationship with God, and so Isaiah was able to identify the hand of God in the world. Isaiah was, in fact, a man of faith prior to his acceptance of the call. Isaiah bears witness to the reality that, for most of us, a response to God's call in our life, is rooted first and foremost, in a relationship with God. Discuss how a pre-existing relationship with God, makes responding to God's call easier to understand, and perhaps easier for us to respond with a “yes”. How do we achieve this kind of relationship with God?

1 Corinthians 5:1-11

“Brothers and sisters, of the good news”

Paul affirms the people of Corinth by identifying them as people of the good news. In other words, they are seen as instruments of the revelation of the good news to the world – they too, as prophets, carry that good news with them, and share it with others, by what they say and do. How do we, as prophets of today, carry the good news to the world?

Luke 5:1-11

“Do not be afraid”

Fear can be a powerful force in our lives, a force that sometimes causes us to not do that which we know is right, and what we ought to do. Peter was terrified; he was afraid of what Jesus might ask of him because he knew instinctively that it would change his life forever. It is understandable that Peter's encounter with Jesus raised up within Peter the emotion of fear. Yet Jesus called Peter, *not* to fear but to

follow Him, which Peter did. Have you ever had an encounter with Jesus, where He lifted you up from fear? Discuss.

CARING-PRAYING TIME (15-20 minutes)

1. **Word of the Week:** “*Here am I Lord; send me.*”

2. **Suggestion for the Week:**

Spend some time this week reflecting upon the life God has called you to live. How did you know this was what God wanted you to do? Were you afraid at first? How did you overcome your fear or hesitation? What indicators in your life affirm that the life you are called to live, is a response to God's call and invitation for you? Do you feel God has walked this journey with you?

3. **Intercessions:** (Response: **Lord, hear our prayer**)

Leader: (Psalm 138) Lord, on the day I called, you answered me.

1. That the church may not abandon sinners, but may offer them a more fruitful life and an invitation to follow Jesus, we pray to the Lord...
2. That in a world shaken by the thunder of violence, the Lord may send messengers of peace, and heralds of reconciliation, we pray to the Lord...
3. That those who have been made to feel unclean or unworthy may come to know Jesus as the God of forgiveness, we pray to the Lord...
4. That the COVID-19 virus will soon disappear, and we pray for the many people who have suffered from it, we pray to the Lord...
5. That we who have been called to be Prophets, may use our gifts, to share with others, the joyful invitation to follow Christ, we pray to the Lord...
6. That those who have died may come at last to see the Lord enthroned in heaven's glory, we pray to the Lord...

How can we help you in prayer this week?

Let us pray (*together*)

*O God of infinite glory,
to our unclean lips and faltering hands,
you entrust the responsibility to us, to proclaim the gospel.
Sustain us with your Spirit, so that through our witness,
your word may find an eager welcome in every heart.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God's favours today, we pray that all those in our influence be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we pray as one,

OUR FATHER ...

Celebrating the Word, Resurrection Ministries of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province (including the former Resurrection Centre), 265 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G7. (*Celebrating the Word* was founded by Father Frank Ruetz, C.R. deceased 2012). For information: Website: www.resurrectionists.ca. Email: provincialoffice@resurrectioncollege.ca. The Scripture version used in this commentary is the New Revised Standard Version (copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA).