

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time C2025

Any time we celebrate the Holy Mass and before the consecration of the Holy species of bread and wine, we sing the "Sanctus." We say with the whole congregation: "Holy, Holy, Holy God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory." Those words come from Isaiah 6: 3 and Psalm 19: 2. The rest comes from the acclamation of people at the entrance of our Lord Jesus in Jerusalem (Matthew 21: 9).

The celebration of the Holy Mass is the transposition of celestial liturgy on earth. Any time we celebrate the Holy Mass we are in the presence of the Most Holy God, worthy of praise and glory, and worshiped by angels and seraphim.

In his presence, we can only acknowledge who we truly are as poor sinners. That is why at beginning of each Mass we start by confessing our sins, even striking three times our chest, like the publican in the temple. We do the same before the Holy Communion by asking forgiveness to the "Lamb of God."

Acknowledging human sinfulness is what Isaiah did as we heard in the first reading. As Isaiah discovered the holiness and the grandeur of God, he judged himself unworthy of seeing God face to face. And God, who wanted him to work for him purified him from all wickedness and sinfulness. By doing so, God legitimated him so that, in spite of his personal limitations, he might work for him. It is also what St Paul did in acknowledging that because of his past he was not fit to be called apostle. It is equally what Peter has done in today's Gospel as he was overwhelmed by the miracle of the catching of fish.

However, being a sinner does not imply being unsuitable for the work of the Lord. It means only that the awareness of our human fragility pushes us to rely more on God than on our own strength. We might have a lot of limitations, but God can make us better persons and capable of fulfilling his will at satisfaction. Because it is he who has called us to work for him, he can lend us his assistance and his support so that we do not fail in our duty.

Then, we understand why Isaiah, in spite of his unworthiness, just said: "Here I am" (...) "Send me". In the same way, Paul and Peter became apostles, the first to the gentile nations and the second to his brothers, the Jews. So, the circumstances through which God calls us to work for him may vary from one individual to another, but it is the same God who operates in each one of us for the glory of his name.

Though it is God's will that we work for him, it does not mean that the work will be easy. We have to toil and work hard before we come to a success. What is sure, however, is that we will never lack God's help and assistance in difficult moments. That is why we should not be discouraged when we work hard and the result does not follow. It is like the disciples in today's Gospel. They worked so hard the whole night long, but caught nothing. When the morning came up and they were about to go home with their bitterness in heart, it was at that moment that our Lord intervened.

What the Gospel teaches us is what we already know by experience, namely that those who give up because of the difficulties of life, give up too soon. In the case of evident failure, we have to hope, even if it seems that there is nothing more to hope for. That can be the case with the education of children or the abandoning of the Church, or the no practice of the faith initially received from family, etc.

What the Gospel teaches us also is that where our Lord is involved things can change for the best. Therefore, we have to invoke him in our prayer and supplication as often as we can, especially when encountering very difficult problems of life. He is not indifferent to our toils and crises. He is open to us and capable of intervening in our favor.

On the other hand, where we have failed, we have to start again and not drop our arms. Even when all the circumstances seem to be unfavorable, we still have a shot, at least one more shot. By starting again, we show that we keep our hope intact, because we believe in our Lord who can make the impossible become possible. As he has done it in the past, with his disciples, he can do it today for you and me. If we wait for a perfect set of circumstances, we will never begin at all. If we want a miracle, we must take our Lord at his word when he bids us to attempt the impossible.

As it appears, today's Gospel invites us to hope, but it is not a hope based on an idealistic optimism that believes that things will be better, but rather on the truth that God will never abandon us whatever might be the difficulties we go through. Therefore, we have to be convinced that, though life is difficult and surrounded by many contrarities, we are not doomed to complete failure. God who has called us to serve him through our personal vocation is also capable of sustaining us in our mission and tasks.

We have not only to trust God, but also to be unafraid, because he can change our fate and give us joy again. Let us ask him to give us the courage to fulfill our vocation in this life in spite of all the difficulties we can meet. Let us pray that we have the courage to start again from where we have failed. Amen.

Isaiah 6: 1-2a, 3-8; 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11; Luke 5: 1-11



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