

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Homily, Deacon Steve Moses

All three readings today have a similar theme. They all recount individuals being called to the service of God, and each was called in a dramatic fashion.

A burning ember on the lips of Isaiah, the appearance of the risen Christ to Paul on the road; and Peter, James, and John having their boats almost sink under the weight of the fish they caught.

If we look closely we see **the common denominator is the love of God. God has a special love for every person and a special path for each of us to follow.**

To find our way, all that's required of us is to cooperate with God.

Those of you here today who are elders (and I use the word elder with the up most respect and tenderness) you have a greater portion of wisdom only gained by living life.

I'm sure you would agree that **often, God's plan for us is not what we would expect.** Life has many twists and turns. Consider the lives of some of those who have lived in recent times like Pope John Paul II or Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.

During WWII, Karol Wojtyla (better know as Pope John Paul II) was a laborer and an actor, but led by God, he entered an underground seminary and we know what a blessing that become for all of us.

God had plans for him. As a matter of fact, his Episcopal ordination was held on September 28, 1958, the Feast of Saint Wenceslaus.

Born in Albania, Blessed Teresa found herself seeking out the dying in the gutters of Calcutta. This despite the fact that in her youth those around her questioned her calling. God had plans for her too.

When we accept God's love in our lives, he can ask surprising and sometimes challenging things of us.

In the Book of Hebrews we read words that apply to every person; We are "to obey the call of God and to set out, not knowing where we were to go" (cf. Heb 11:8).

You too have been chosen by God.

Saint Paul whose feast we recently celebrated reminded the Corinthians,

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,
whom you have from God,
and that you are not your own?
For you have been purchased at a price.
Therefore, glorify God in your body”.

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

What’s important is not how you are called or where you may be led by the Holy Spirit,
What is important is how you respond to the call of God in your life.

I want you to take a moment right now and ask yourself;

**“How do I respond to the God who knew me and called me by name before the foundation of
the world?”**

“The ways of holiness are many, according to the vocation of each individual.”

(Novo millennio ineunte, 31)

Not all are called to the vows of **religious life**.

Not all are called to the **clergy**.

Not all are called to the vocation of **marriage**.

Not all are called to the health care field, the education field, the agricultural field; the arenas of justice,
governance, politics, athletics, or the human service field,
not all are called to be a father or a mother.

But all of us are called.

How many here are baptized? Go ahead and raise your hand if you’re baptized. Don’t be shy.

Take a quick look around at your neighbors; if your hand is up, you have been called by God. Go ahead and
put your hands down.

Through baptism men and women, boys and girls, are incorporated into Christ. We are formed into God’s
people.

In the Rite of Baptism we are reminded that we become a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit.
By our baptism we are justified and clothed in Christ by the sacramental cleansing with water.

We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the first time.

We are anointed with Chrism, a sign of the outpouring of the Spirit who gives new life in Christ, and enables us to live in the righteousness of God.

Baptism is the door to life and to the kingdom of God.

It's by the Sacrament of baptism that we are incorporated into the Church, built into a house where God lives, in the Spirit, into a Holy nation and a royal priesthood.

It is a sacramental bond of unity linking all of us who have been signed by it.

You and I are called to be a part of the family of God, **and** we are called to take an active role within the family.

The Church teaches us (CCC 2233);

“Becoming a disciple of Jesus means accepting the invitation to belong to God's family, to live in conformity with His way of life: "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother."

My friends, for so I will call you, place Christ at the center of your life and in all of your activities; and Christ will draw you to himself. (cf. Matt 5:6)

Saint Ephrem, a deacon of the Church wrote,

“In your sacrament we daily embrace you and receive you into our bodies; make us worthy to experience the resurrection for which we hope.

We have had your treasure hidden within us ever since we received baptismal grace; it grows ever richer at your sacramental table.

Teach us to find our joy in your favor! Lord, we have within us your memorial, received at your spiritual table; let us possess it in its full reality when all things shall be made new.”

(http://www.vatican.va/spirit/documents/spirit_20010424_sant-efrem_en.html)

Isaiah said “Here I am, send me!”

Paul said, “But by the grace of God I am what I am and His grace to me has not been ineffective.”

And the reply of Peter, James and John was eloquent. When they brought their boats to the shore, "they left everything and followed Him".

The importance in these responses is not what each left behind, but what each one picked up the day they responded to the love and call of God.

They let go of themselves and took up everyone else.

Their focus changed from "me and mine" to "God and everyone else."

God still speaks to us today.

We hear Him every time the Word is proclaimed.

We have a conscience, a soul—we hear Him speak to us there.

In prayer, we find ourselves in conversation with Him.

And in the Eucharist we are about to share, we come face to face with the risen Christ in the bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Christ to which we give our assent, our 'yes', every time we say amen, we say I believe.

As you prepare to receive the Body and Blood of Christ today, take a moment to open yourself to the grace of God.

Pray for a special outpouring of the Spirit upon yourselves, your family and friends, our parish and school, on those who will be baptized this weekend, and on those preparing to be received into the church at the Easter Vigil.

And don't neglect to pray for our pastor and the community at large.

Take up Jesus' challenge to love God and others as yourself.

By doing this, you're living out your baptismal call as you participate in the life of the Church as true sons and daughters.