

# 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

February 6, 2010

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA  
Rev. Jeff McGowan

## 1<sup>ST</sup> READING: ISAIAH 6:1-2A, 3-8

Then I said, "Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips living among a people of unclean lips... Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?"

## PSALM 138

When I called you answered me; you built up strength within me.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

For I am the least of the apostles, not fit 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 to me has not been ineffective.

## GOSPEL: LUKE 5:1-11

After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deeper water and lower your nest for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." ...When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."

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This is my friend, "Punxsutawney Phil." After his big day up in Pennsylvania, he is visiting Florida. Do you know what he did this week? That's right, Phil saw his shadow; so we are supposedly going to have six more weeks of winter. It is interesting to me that on the same day, the Catholic Church throughout the world celebrates the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. On that day we traditionally bless the candles that will be used the rest of the year. So Phil saw his shadow and we see the light.

Today's readings reflect human reluctance to change and God's overwhelming mission to change us. Isaiah's excuse was that he was a man with unclean lips; God sent an angel with burning charcoal to fry his lips so he could proclaim God's message as a prophet. Paul was the persecutor of Christians; God knocked him right off his high horse and made him temporarily blind so he could become the greatest evangelist. Peter was a very frustrated fisherman and sinner; God sent him more fish than he could have imagined so he'd lead people to the light. God is calling and chasing us. Where are we in relation to God? Are we moving toward Him, away from Him or are we standing still? God will find a way to change us.

The movie, *Invictus*, takes place in post-apartheid South Africa in 1995. Nelson Mandela, having been imprisoned for 24 years, is the new president. The country is tense. The whites are afraid the black majority will demand justice for the decades of poverty, brutality, and oppression they endured under the racist regimes. But Mandela, as portrayed by Morgan Freeman, knows that score-settling would destroy the fragile new democracy. President Mandela shocks everybody by inviting the white government workers to stay on. Then he includes whites in his security detail. There is still an uneasy trust. But the real story is about the Rugby championship that finally brought the country together. With the cooperation of the Rugby team's captain, played by Matt Damon, Mandela transforms the team from underachievers to an inspiration for all South African youth, from a symbol of arrogant white rule to a national image for unity, from old ways of hatred to new ways of partnership for South Africa. Nelson Mandela could not forget the past but he put out into the deeper water of hope. As he did so, he was transformed in the eyes of all his countrymen from a threat to the healer of the nation's soul. God's mission is to change us.

I have a homework assignment for everyone. When we get home take a sheet of paper and write down your talents. Don't be shy, don't sell yourself short, be honest, and list all the talents you can think of. Then circle any one of the talents that you can take credit for generating yourself. Can you think of any not from God? Consider everything from eyesight to foresight.

God's mission is to change us from being afraid of our shadows to the light of trusting God. In today's Gospel, Jesus is challenging us to put aside our own discouragement and doubts in order to lower our nets into the deep water of Gospel faith and hope and love. Putting God first often means risking our own security and comfort and putting aside our frustration and exhaustion; it means continuing to fish despite the ridicule and doubts of many who have returned to shore. And it means discovering how rich that truly makes us. Confident of God's grace and wisdom, we can transform our own Galilees by setting our own small boats and fishing nets—despite the long night already—to the work of bringing in the human catch which is God's Good News!

