

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2019

My beloved brothers and sisters, our life in Heaven will be determined by how we answer two crucial questions: What does your relationship with God look like? And, how is your relationship with Him being lived out? It is not enough to be a nice guy; our quality of life on earth determines our eternal life. Ted Bundy, from all accounts, was a nice guy and a serial killer. It is possible to be loaded with talent, lots of charisma, and utterly devoid of Character. It is possible to have loads of money, popularity and still be an unhappy and unfulfilled human being! On the other hand, it is impossible to have a healthy and loving relationship with God and not be on the path of holiness and fulfillment!

In the readings we have just heard, both Isaiah and Peter, have had a life-changing and powerful encounter with the Lord God, in both cases, two things happen: First, they are profoundly aware that this is a Divine Encounter, and they respond with the recognition that they are sinful men; and secondly, in both cases, God calls them to His Mission- they are sent to His people!

In the presence of the all Holy One, they are given a glimpse of the Infinite purity, Holiness and love of God, His utter and absolute worthiness to the whole of our attention and adoration, the whole self-giving of our lives. In comparison with the Divine Majesty they have just encountered, they are filled with a profound knowledge of their profound sinfulness: "I am a man of unclean lips living amongst a people of unclean lips...;" and, in Peter's case: "Leave me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" In both cases, the utter miracle of Grace is simply stated- God, the God of Infinite Goodness and Mercy, does not leave them nor strike them. He asks for their self-surrender and obedience to Him! Only then, after they have recognized their sinfulness, their Need for God, does God reveal to them their life's mission; only when they are humbled with the radical knowledge that they have nothing to give to God, except their sinfulness, does God's call to them and send them!

The same measure is true for each of us: Do I have an awareness of sinfulness in my life, of my absolute need for God's Grace? Am I aware of how much I need His forgiveness and mercy? Do I accept the infinite Grace of Forgiveness waiting for

me in the Confessional? Only when I begin to hear how much He forgives me, can I then begin to hear How Much He Loves Me! Only then can I hear His call to serve Him.

St. John Paul the Great said: “The loss of the sense of sin is thus a form or consequence of the denial of God: (it is) a form of atheism, (wrapped in secularism).” By denying my sinfulness and need for reconciliation, I choose to remain bound up in my sins, and refuse to allow the True God to reconcile me to Himself! “To do so, is also to live as if He did not exist, to eliminate Him from one’s daily life.” Thus, the Confessional is a humble admission of how infinitely much I am loved, and how infinitely I need to be loved!