

Have you ever found yourself not up to the task at hand?

Thinking you are unworthy

Thinking there are others more talented

Others with more abilities

Others more deserving

We can all find ourselves there

And it can be frightening

A new wife or husband

Getting ready to head off to college or a new school

Being a new mom or dad

Being called to the priesthood or religious life

A new job

Almost everything we experience in life

When it is new, can be a frightening experience

We can find ourselves thinking we are not ready

We are not worthy

And honestly, if we are going to rely only on our own abilities

We are probably right

But when we unite ourselves to God

We can do more than just survive

We can thrive

Our readings give us 3 examples of this

In our reading from Isaiah

The king of Israel had died

The kingdom was in disarray

Isaiah has a vision

He is at the throne of God

The angels are singing

Holy, Holy, Holy

(Side note)

This is where we get the *Sanctus* we sing at each Mass

For the Hebrew speaking people,

A threefold acclimation is the highest praise there is

It is also why, when Christ fell three times

There could be no greater fall

Whenever a threefold event like this occurs

It points us to the infinite

So Isaiah finds himself in the presence of God

Knowing he is a sinful man

Knowing he is unworthy, he calls out

Woe is me, I am doomed

I am a man of unclean lips, among a people of unclean lips

Then an angel approaches

And cleanses him

Because it will be his mission to proclaim the word of the Lord

His lips are purified

Strengthened by this

When he hears *whom shall I send*

Isaiah stands ready

Here I am, send me

This, too, is reflected in our Mass

Like Isaiah, we proclaim our unworthiness in the *Confiteor*

When we say *'I confess'*

Then we are cleansed by the Eucharist

Not by a burning coal touching our lips

But by the body and blood, the soul and divinity of Christ

The burning fire of God's love

His only Son, residing within us

And at the end of the Mass

Go forth, the Mass is ended

Like Isaiah being sent to his people

We are sent back into the world

To continue the mission we have been given

Then we have St Paul

He doesn't let his successes go to his head

Like Isaiah, Paul had a special encounter with God

In this he received the Gospel

And he went to work bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles

He first points to Cephas, or Peter

Then to the 12

Finally to himself, the least of the apostles

Not even fit of the name

But by the grace of God, I am what I am

Paul acknowledges Peter has a special role among the apostles

He has a certain primacy among them

This role continues even to our own day

Our Holy Father holds Peter's authority in our world

It is their relationship and attachment to Peter

And his being selected by Christ

This unbroken line of succession continues today

It is not about the worthiness of the man selected as pope

It is about the holiness of the one they represent

Jesus Christ

Even our first pope had his moments

And in these he learned not to rely on himself

We see many times in our Gospels what happens when Peter forgets

Not the least denying Christ three times

Again that threefold aspect of Peter's denial

In our Gospel we have another example

Peter and his crew had worked through the night

The best time to fish

They caught nothing

After cleaning their nets

Ready to head home for a few hours rest

Here comes Jesus

A friend Peter was coming to know

But whose lifestyle was not Peter's

Peter was a working man

Not educated

Familiar with Scripture like any good Jew

But certainly no Rabbi

But they knew each other

So when Jesus asks to use his boat so he doesn't get crushed

Peter agrees

But then, when he finishes, Jesus tells him

Put out into the deep and lower your nets

What? Every fisherman on Lake Gennesaret knew a few things

First, the fish in this lake are in the shallow areas

Where there is cover and food

And the prime fishing time is at night

Not during the day

To top it off, they were the professionals

Not this preacher

But Peter agrees, and they set off

And they are astounded by the catch

Peter recognizes this is not about catching fish

He doesn't know exactly what it is about Jesus

He probably isn't so sure he wants to know

So he throws himself at Jesus' feet

Depart from me Lord

For I am a sinful man

Jesus responds with an invitation

Do not be afraid

From now on you will be catching men

This simple invitation turns the astonishment from the catch

To commitment to follow Jesus

As we have said before

We all have a specific work or mission in this life

I cannot do yours and you cannot do mine

**And no one discovers or completes their mission sitting on the
sidelines**

The word *pagan* means non-combatant

As Christians, we are called to get into the fight

We are anointed at our baptism for combat

A Christian life is not a comfortable, safe or predictable life

It is not about burying our treasures and talents

Trying to live a life of mediocrity

Keeping ourselves safe from the battles raging all around

Thinking we can slide safely into heaven

We are called to put aside our unworthiness

Our doubts, weaknesses, or our limitations

And engage the battle

By not being defined by what we do

But letting what we do be defined by who we are

***Gaudium et Spes*: work does not give man dignity**

Men, sons and daughters of God, made in his image

This gives work its dignity

So whatever we do

Being a housewife or a day laborer

Being a doctor, lawyer, a farmer or a plumber

These all have equal dignity in God's eyes

And we are called to use these to serve God by serving our neighbors

In the very ordinariness of our lives

Because God chooses ordinary men and women to do extraordinary things

We can try to choose the safe path

Or we can accept Christ's invitation to a life of adventure

Where we will fall and get up

Where we will fail and succeed

Where we will make a mess of things, and where we will get it right

God doesn't lay out everything in front of us

Showing us everything in store for us

He simply tells us he will be with us and invites us

Put out into the deep, and do not be afraid