

## Homily-5th Sunday of the Year C/ World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life 2010

One of our Catholic Hymns has this refrain: “*Here I am Lord, is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart*”. With these words anticipating total readiness to yield to the mission of God, we unite with the whole Church to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life. In the Old Testament, there were certain persons consecrated to God, Nazarites and priests (cf. Lev 10:8-10; Num 6:2-5; Jdg 13:3-7; 1Sam 1:11; Luke 1:15). In the New Testament, Jesus himself is the fulfillment of this act of total consecration. May God bless all those he has called into the Consecrated Life as priest or religious through the same Christ our Lord, Amen.

Beloved, this calling is about saying, “Yes” to God. The commitment is to aspire to worship God in the beauty of holiness. Then, the glory of the Lord will be revealed. We want to worship God to the height of worship we see the angels carry out in heaven, as Isaiah’s vision indicates in our First Reading ([Is 6:1-2a, 3-8](#)): “In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above. They cried one to the other, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!’”

Notice that they were not just saying or reciting it: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts”. “They cried one to another”. Just imagine passion and the depth of worship involved, such that “At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke”. These angels are totally consecrated and committed. Such is the kind our earthly Liturgy tries to model. The vocation to the Consecrated Life, with an undivided attention (cf. 1Cor 7:23-35), is a testimony that no sacrifice is too great for God. Even the laity is also called to make a reasonable degree of commitment to God. They are not here as spectators. We are not here weekly to watch the priest perform. We are not here to be entertained. Not at all! All must worship directly, wholeheartedly, in active participation.

Beloved, we are here to “declare the wonderful deeds of him who called ... [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1Pet 2:9). We must do this from the depths of our whole being – spirit, soul and body. St. Paul recounts from the heart the wonderful deeds of God in our Second Reading ([1Cor 15:1-11](#)): “I am reminding you ... of the gospel I preached to you.... Through it, you are also being saved... unless you believed in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas.... Last of all... he appeared to me”.

Beloved in Christ, this is the core of the marvelous saving deeds of God we capture in our Creed every Sunday, namely, the mystery of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection. St. Paul says they are “of first importance”. Do you remember our hierarchy of truths and the hierarchy of gifts last Sunday? Isn’t something this important worth having men and women that are totally consecrated to the celebration of the mysteries of faith as priests or religious?

Today, many young people shun vocations. Perhaps, they would like some kind of vision in order to be doubly sure. Some feel unworthy. They forget that Isaiah, Paul and Peter were common people like them and God chose them. In addition, the laity often look at the priest or religious as “super human” and impeccable who should never err. And if they do err, it is wrongly perceived as being hypocritical. Beloved, no man or woman is worthy of the calling. It is simply a divine privilege. St. Paul says, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us” (2Cor 4:7).

For Isaiah, Paul and Peter, it was a privilege. Isaiah exclaimed, “Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” St. Paul declares, “For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God”. And Simon Peter ([Lk 5:1-11](#)) fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” Hence, the Scripture says, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.... And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Rom 8:29-30).

Finally, it means we should be slow to criticize our bishops, priests and religious. Rather, we must always pray for them. “God chose what is foolish... what is weak ... what is low and despised ... so that no human being might boast in the presence of God” (1Cor 1:27-29). Although they are unworthy, God’s providence willed to use them for his glory, as is evident in our Gospel passage. Jesus commanded, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Peter hesitated, saying, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets”. What a wonderful outcome it was! Indeed, “Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth” (Ps 124:8).