

5 Sunday C

February 7, 2010

Cathedral

5:00 and 10:00

God calls.

It can happen to anyone, at any time, anywhere. (1)

For Mother Teresa, she was traveling on a train. Life was comfortable for her, settled. And then, unexpected, out of the blue, at the age of 36, she experienced a calling that God wanted her to live with and serve the poor. It wasn't an audible voice. However, God called her. It can happen anywhere. For Mother Teresa, it was sitting on a train headed for the Himalayas.

For the apostle Paul, the Risen Jesus called him as he was traveling to Damascus. Angrily he was intent on stamping out this new movement around Jesus. Jesus called him and, later on Paul could confess, **“I am not fit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God.”**

He was no model of tolerance. It can happen to anyone. Looking back, Paul could proclaim, **“By God’s grace I am what I am.”**

There’s a parishioner within the Cathedral who had a fury like Paul’s. For six years she wanted someone dead. No wistful hope, she hated the person and with all her energy she wanted him dead. Then one day—she woke up that morning never expecting it—God burned away her resentment, much like the angel, holding an ember with tongs, put the burning charcoal on the lips of Isaiah, purging his wickedness. Then that Cathedral parishioner experienced God calling her, and she has blossomed in a mission of healing for those with grief.

“Don’t be afraid. From now on you will be catching people.”

Dorothy Day spent many a night in bars in New York City. On the way home, with dawn breaking, she would often stop in at St. Joseph’s Church on Sixth Avenue. What attracted her were the people kneeling there in prayer for the early Mass. Later she wrote, “I seemed to feel the faith of those about me...and perhaps I asked even then, ‘God be merciful to me a

sinner.” (2) In God’s holy presence we are overwhelmed with our unworthiness. It’s *God’s* presence, though, and *God* calls.

God called Dorothy Day, and by grace she became a devout Catholic and a bold witness for justice and nonviolence as she lived and worked with the poor.

Today we hear the stories of how God called the prophet Isaiah, the apostle Paul and the fisherman Simon Peter. It’s not simply from a long time ago.

God calls now.

It can happen to anyone, at any time, anywhere.

We give thanks that Jesus nudges us beyond our fears and, in a way deep within, calls us to do his work. *Each* of us has a share in his mission.

“Here I am, Lord. Send me!”

(1) Barbara E. Reid, O.P., develops this insight well in “Seized by Grace” in America (February 1-8, 2010), pg. 37.

(2) Quoting Dorothy Day in From Union Square to Rome,” as given by Mark Link, S.J., Vision 2000: Praying Scripture in a Contemporary Way (Allen, Texas: Tabor Publishing, 1992), pg. 260.