

Our Lady of Lourdes
5th Sunday of Ordinary Time
February 7, 2010

Readings:

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

1st Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

Fr. Bob

The last line of the Gospel tells us that after Jesus told them their mission, the disciples left everything and followed him. In those words, it sounds like they abandoned everything and we have the image of them, at the end of the account, walking behind Jesus as he leads them away from their former lives.

A problem with this image for us is that something unique, and seemingly impossible for us, with all our commitments, would be just asking too much. Sometimes we think the Gospel always demands a very different lifestyle to the one we have. And sometimes, the fact is, that's exactly what it does, since our lifestyles often leave a lot to be desired. But today's Gospel should still be taken seriously for all of us. Luke, again, tells us that they "left everything and followed him." But we know, that following Christ, did not mean, for example, that Peter, abandon his family, never to see them again. And we also know from the Gospel accounts that the disciples returned to their work, to their fishing, a number of times during their life with Jesus.

It may seem like a contradictory message Luke is giving us. He is telling us that following Christ requires a radical commitment. We have to get rid of anything that might interfere with the particular mission that Christ gives us. But in looking at all of the Gospel accounts, the message of Luke finds its consistency. Very often, the things that we have to leave behind, the things we have to discard, the things we have to let go of, are not the tangible things of the world like family, job or the other responsibilities that we have. More often, what we have to discard or abandon, are the things that have to do with the heart and with our minds. The matters that concern us so much that they get in the way at

times of even being able to pray. These are ‘objects’ like pride or ambition that consume so much of our thoughts. They can be ‘objects’ like possessions or the want for possessions. They can be ‘objects’ like position, authority or the pursuit of them, or maintaining them. They can be ‘objects’ like old resentments developed over time, or new ones that we’ve just discovered. And you can add your own list of ‘objects’ that sometimes take on an importance that is out of proportion to what we should be doing or thinking.

At the beginning of our Gospel today, Luke makes a point that is connected with all of this. Jesus is teaching the crowd and many were starting to believe in him. Some of them were notorious sinners, and some of them were not recognized in the religious community of the day. But they were all listening, they were all crowding around, trying to get closer and trying to hear what Jesus was saying.

Luke reassures the community, and reassures us today, that no one is beyond following Christ and following him closely. We will always find ourselves struggling with something that holds us back. but as long as there is the willingness, to leave things behind, to leave parts of ourselves behind that are destructive then the chance of redemption, and the opportunity of being a true disciple is present. as we know the disciples were not perfect. But their intention to follow behind Christ, their desire to please him and their own determination are the attributes that allowed them to be close to their savior.

May we pray in this Eucharist, that we may be more willing to put aside many things, to abandon them, so that we may follow Christ with the same dedication and zeal of those early disciples.

We are called to put aside many things in our lives. But in return, we receive from our Lord, the many opportunities for what is truly important.