



"Do not be Afraid" Let our response be "Here am I Lord, Send Me"

The painting above is from the African Mafa. The Mafa usually has Jesus wearing the color red. We can see Peter kneeling before Jesus, confessing his sin. We can see an African re-creation of this scene, with two boats, four fishermen, and swarms of fish in the boats and the net.

As we reflect on the scriptures this week, we are reminded of God's great and awesome power, His ability to bring healing and forgiveness into our lives. We hear of the return of Prophecy to the people of Israel upon the death of King Uzziah. This turning point occurred because the king had turned away and misguided the people. Although the people suffered greatly, God's mercy, healing, and empowerment of the people take place in His reaffirmation of the role of prophecy of Isaiah.

"Woe is me; I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips;" "Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember that he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with it and said, "See, now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged."

Even though the King had turned the people away from the Lord, even though God had ceased to speak through His prophets, we see the transformation that God forgives, heals, restores, empowers, and sends forth. Isaiah's sin is that he had become silent and had stopped speaking God's truth. Today, we see Isaiah has been cleansed, his sins and that of the people forgiven; God does not hesitate to call for someone to speak on

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His behalf, to proclaim His message and Word to His people. "Whom shall I send?" Like Isaiah's response, let our response be, "Here I am, Lord, Send Me!"

This is, too, for us, a time where we need prophetic witnesses of the Gospel and the Good News of Jesus Christ to a society and world that has turned away from truly following the Lord. False prophets, as they were, had misguided the people, the Prophet had become silent in the face of the atrocities and deception of King Uzziah, and they had turned from the praise, honor, and worship to following falsehood, lies, and deception. Like in the reading from Isaiah, we are called to allow the Lord to use us to speak truth, power, healing, and love to a world that has turned away from the truth and the ways of the Lord.

In today's Gospel Jesus, disciples listen to Jesus teach the crowds. Having preached, Jesus invites the disciples to head out to deep waters and lower their nets for a catch. Although tired from the work of the day, although seemingly in despair and dismayed at the lack of results, the disciples trust Jesus' word and they go out to deep waters and lower their nets.

You see, Church Christ is depending on us, even if we are tired, tired of injustice, tired of lies and deception, tired of twisted truth and wore out lies, tired of evil being called good and good evil, tired of twisting the truth and being trapped by lies, Christ still needs us when we are tired. Christ still needs us even when we are worn out by the heat of the day. Christ needs us to be fishers of men, to speak His word of truth to a Church, a Nation, and a World that has turned from the Gospel message of Justice, Dignity, and Peace for all people and seeing in the poor, the immigrant, the stranger, those who are different and opportunity to do good and lift up human life. One cannot be Pro-Life yet take newborns from their parents; one cannot be Pro-Life and objectify persons, reducing them to animal-like states. One cannot be Pro-Life and deny the basic needs to live. How can one say they promote life, then after granting legal residency and assistance to those whose lives have been threatened and, remove their legal status and return them for possible persecution and execution? So

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today, we are called not to be afraid. Who will Go for Us? Who will Speak for Us? Who will stand up for Us? Let our Response be, "Here I am, Lord, Send Me"!