

**Homily – Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Vietnamese Martyrs Catholic Parish – February 6, 2022**

Năm mới toàn gia bình an. (Traditional greeting meaning: I wish that the new year will bring health and peace to your family).

The readings proclaimed today speak to us about how God acts when he wants to give a mission to someone. Isaiah in the temple sees the glory of God. He gets a glimpse of how small and impure he is before the Lord. He is not worthy to give a message in the name of God. But a seraphim purifies his lips with an ember and he confidently replies, “Here I am,” Lord, “send me.”

In the second reading, St. Paul, explains his faith in the resurrection and invites the Corinthians to discover what it means to believe in the Risen Christ. Ever since he ran into Jesus on the road to Damascus, he knows whom he has trusted.

Peter “worked hard all night” and “caught nothing.” Then he follows the Lord’s command to lower the nets and discovers his insignificance at the miraculous catch. With this sign, Jesus entered his heart and transformed him. This enables him and the others, so that they can carry out their mission to be “fishers of men.”

The three of them, Isaiah, Paul and Peter, discover their unworthiness before God, but they trust His word. Then, they leave everything to fulfill their God-given mission. The early Christians had no means. They encountered a hostile culture and a difficult environment, but trusting in Jesus they went out to spread the gospel throughout the world. They were also aware of their unworthiness, but they acknowledged the authority of the one who sent them. It is the authority of their own author, so they knew they would be enabled. They trusted.

Likewise, Christians of all times are sent on a “mission.” More than ever, today we need to be an “outgoing” Church, in order to reach so many people who walk through life without hope. I am sure you know people who are in need of good news, especially the good news that Jesus calls them to eternal happiness. The thought of leaving everything behind and “Put out into deep water” may be scary, especially when we translate it to our own reality. It means letting go of our old ways and anything else that holds us back. It means overcoming what Pope Francis calls “self-referentiality.” It means focusing on doing good, rather than feeling good. But most of all, it means trusting the Lord who calls, and answering his call.

Do you need special talent, brilliant qualities, or standing out to be a missionary disciple of Jesus? Not at all! It is only necessary to be as Peter appears in today’s gospel. We must be men and women who trust Jesus, are capable of self-criticism and give ourselves to others. It is quite simple, but not easy at all.

It was hard for a seasoned fisherman to trust a carpenter’s advice about fishing. How hard is it for us to trust God? Trust is necessary to move forward. We need to examine ourselves to find out what holds us back. It is difficult to accept and confess our weakness. We need to feel uncomfortable, unworthy, before God. Then we must commit to serve out of love, even to the point of suffering, because we know well who sent us.

Blessed Mother of Guadalupe, show us the way to leave behind anything that holds us back from following Jesus as missionary disciples in a synodal Church. Lead us on our new beginning, this new lunar year!