

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

February 10, 2019

In the first reading from the Prophet Isaiah, the question and an invitation are one and the same, "Whom shall I send?" We often sing the hymn "Here I Am Lord" that asks this very question.

The words are:

*"I the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?"*

"Whom shall I send?" Whom shall I send to encourage that single mother? To hold the hand of the dying? To just be a friend? Whom shall I send to teach the children? Whom shall I send to "do for one of the least of my brothers?"

This question is an invitation to take the first step into a new vocation, a new job if you will. I want to explore this vocation, this job, and what the qualifications are.

What does this word "VOCATION" really refer to? We often hear the word, usually only in reference to becoming a priest or in relation to the "Vocation of Marriage." In her book, "**Forming Intentional Disciples**," Sherry Weddell calls it "a supernatural mystery that emerges from a sustained encounter with Christ." In short, Discipleship.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops have described disciples as those who "make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus no matter the cost to themselves" (*From an article by John P. Moore, "What is Catholic Discipleship" dated September 29, 2017*). Disciples are willing to use their God given talents and graces to build the Kingdom of God. This is a "Drop the Net" decision, just as Peter, James and John put down their nets and followed Jesus, we are all called to take up our cross and follow him.

Discipleship requires a vessel with a vision and demands spiritual vitality. The vessel must be humble and holy. The vision requires commitment to helping others and conviction to hold to the cause displayed through the willingness to sacrifice self. Vitality calls for a life filled with longings and desires steeped in love for God and neighbor.

I Peter 4:8-11 gives incite to this vocation to discipleship. Peter tells the churches in Asia Minor,

"Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies . . . "

Are you qualified? The answer is simple and can be found in the final words of the reading from the Prophet Isaiah and in the hymn I opened with; "**Here I am Lord. Is it I lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord if you lead me.**"