

6<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Isaiah 6; 1-8 Luke 5; 1-11

### In for Out

*Lord of the deep waters, you call us from the safety of the shore to an adventure of the spirit: open wide our arms to embrace the world you dare to serve; through Jesus Christ, who gives life in abundance. Amen*

### **Awe. Amazement. Overwhelmed. Surprised.**

These are the signs we find in both the readings today. Isaiah is in the presence of God, Creator of all, who asks “Who shall I send?”, and Isaiah knows that he is a simple man with impure lips...Surely God can't be looking for him. Simon, who is an experienced fisherman, is overwhelmed when he follows the instructions of a carpenter, and the result of this surprises him, so that he falls on his knees, because he recognises that something wonderful has just happened, but Simon can't begin to grasp why he, a simple man is part of all this.

And there is only one way forward – God's grace is here, present, available and all that we can do is accept this grace, because God has accepted these people as they are, for what they are. Both Isaiah and Simon realise that they are not in control of what is going on, they can simply remind themselves that God is the source of all, so they fall before God, in respect, holding fast to what is expressed in Psalm 138, with which we opened the service today: ***The LORD will fulfil his purpose for us; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures for ever.***

Just try to imagine how frightened Isaiah was. Try you put yourself in Simon's place. They both come face to face with a power they can't explain. They both feel unworthy. They both feel empty when faced with the Complete, and they discover that in spite of all that, they come “face-to-face” with the Complete, they are in presence of the force of life, peace, justice. Complete Grace. Both are made whole by the love and the grace of God.

And so, when we come to these readings, we do so as Isaiah and Simon, feeling unworthy, and yet what is it that God doesn't know? God calls, but does not respond for us; God waits for our response. And even when we may respond with scepticism, God responds with abundance.

Both these readings come together in an offer of Comfort, of Hope. We are living times where exhaustion defines so much, not only the Covid reality, but also the uncertainty at the present and of the future. How many people feel that they don't can't keep going, who are giving up – even on those things which they used to enjoy doing, that provided them with what helped them keep going. That is what Simon and Andrew and those who had spent the night out fishing and caught nothing at all felt like – their arms ached, they were cold, they were tired, ready to call it a day. And Jesus invites the to try again, in a different place. But what does Jesus know about this? And why should they do things a different way, they knew what we are doing and how to do it!

Doesn't this describe us and the church today? And what if Jesus is taking advantage of these times where we feel we have lost control to invite us to do some things in a different way? To look in a new direction. How do we see our present? How do we imagine our future? Both as

individuals and as a church. Are we giving up, calling it a day? I'd like you to consider the "Challenge for the Week Ahead" that you will find in Weekly News, in the light of all this.

We must remember that these readings don't start with Isaiah or with Simon. They start with God. God who calls tired, exhausted, even frustrated people, inviting them to respond, and in their response, they will be transformed – soon Simon will become Peter. In their response, which not necessarily is a success story, they both become agents of God's grace, of God's love, they will make a difference. God asks: "Who shall I send?" and then Jesus says: "you will be fishers of people". Called in to be sent out.

Each of us has been called, each of us is different, our calling is to a different way forward, but on the same way. God know how different we are! The impact of the love and the mercy we receive, and that we share cannot be measured. What we should then realise that though we have been called in, from outside, it is a calling for going Out, and simple as we may be, we will be filled with grace, and love, and hope to live that calling. May each of us be reminded of "that" moment in our lives after which nothing was the same. We are in good company, we have each other, and God has chosen to walk with us. Amen

*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. (Thomas Merton)*