

FIRST READING: 1 Corinthians 3:18-23

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians:

Brothers and sisters: Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you considers himself wise in this age, let him become a fool, so as to become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God, for it is written: *God catches the wise in their own ruses*, and again: *The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain*. So let no one boast about human beings, for everything belongs to you, Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or the present or the future: all belong to you, and you to Christ, and Christ to God.
The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 24:1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6

To the Lord belongs the earth and all that fills it.

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it. For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

To the Lord belongs the earth and all that fills it.

Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD? or who may stand in his holy place? He whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean, who desires not what is vain.

To the Lord belongs the earth and all that fills it.

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD, a reward from God his savior. Such is the race that seeks for him, that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

To the Lord belongs the earth and all that fills it.

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke:

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be

catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection for the 22nd Thursday of the Year II

Let no one deceive themselves; as to what? This passage reminded me of a conversation I had with a pediatric surgeon many years ago while I was still a seminarian. I was a chaplain in training and this man a doctor for at least a decade. He was a very talented and skilled surgeon. He told me that even though the surgeries that he performed were successful, that it wasn't he who healed. It was God. God gave him the talent and ability to perform surgery on children. Inevitably it was always God who healed. He went on to say that any surgeon who actually thought that they were the ones who healed people were arrogant and perhaps not the best that they could be. I was impressed by his sense of his work and the grace of God in it. This is how I view my talents, gifts and work as a priest. It is only by the grace of God that I do what I do. If people find any good in my work they see the workings of God in me.

The deception that Paul mentioned is in believing that it is we who are the source of success and not God. God has created you and me and through us, God works whether we know it or not. When we seek God's grace and presence in our lives we seek wisdom, for wisdom is of and from God. We can do this because God has gifted us with faith; in God and in Jesus. Our lives, both individually and as a Church are rooted in God. Conversely, God is rooted in and among us too.

How do we picture Jesus? Each ethnic group pictures Jesus as one like them. This, of course, is untrue. We all know that Jesus was a Jew living in Palestine in the first century of the Common Era. Many of us can picture him as very gentle. Today's gospel depicts Jesus as a powerful and good speaker. He needed the power for his voice to speak outdoors to a large crowd. He must have been good because of the large crowds that gathered. He had savvy and moxie to communicate and control the crowds. To avoid the press of the crowd, he entered Peter's boat. He pushed away a bit from shore to put some water between him and the crowd. In the days before electrified amplification, Jesus would have known that water reflects back more sound than does land. Jesus was persuasive.

The stunt with the fish sure convinced Peter that there was something different about Jesus. Fortunately Jesus did not heed Peter's plea. Instead, Jesus invited Peter to follow him and Peter did just that. Jesus may have made a good marketer; he set the stage to gain faithful followers. He won over Simon Peter and the Zebedee boys. Jesus clever actions in today's gospel have led directly to us. Has Jesus ever invited us? I think of all the people who have guided me in the faith and ministry who have supported, encouraged and challenged me. They delivered Jesus' invitation to me. Who brought it to you?

May we remain open to God's voice in the voices of others.

James D. Beath

September 1, 2022