

## **Homily For Friday of the 14th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II**

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass - July 9, 2022**

**Isaiah 6:1-8** "Woe is me. I am lost. For I am a man of unclean lips among a people of unclean lips."

**Psalms 93:1-5** "The Lord is king. He is robed in majesty."

**Matthew 10:24-33** "What I say to you, proclaim from the housetops."

### **To Him Be the Glory**

#### **Introduction**

A job interview is one of the more terrifying of human experiences. There is a certain sense of placing one's future in the hands of a person or panel of people who you don't even know. It's vulnerable. It's scary. And it bears the possibility of humiliation. This experience is only intensified by the degree to which the position being applied for matters to us and our future.

#### **Isaiah**

Isaiah is going to the most terrifying job interview of all. It's almost impossible to imagine. He was working for King Uzziah as a kind of scribe. But Uzziah has just died and he is out of a job. As great a king as Uzziah was, he was still an earthly king. Now Isaiah is taken before the King of heaven and earth. He is brought there by the highest of the angels, the Seraphs summon him there. Their name means 'the fiery ones. Even their movement, which is constant, shakes the foundations of the temple.

If we are truly sensitive to what is going on in the mass, we might recognize that, as in the book of Revelation, where John sees into the heavenly liturgy, so is Isaiah transported into that same awesome experience. Everything causes him to be in frozen in fear. There is so much incense, the smoke fills the house. God himself is so great in his heavenly life, that just the hem of his robe fills the temple, which cannot hope to contain him.

Then there are the words of these greatest of angels in a constant state of worship. They repeat the words that are given to us, that cause us to fall on our knees: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.

What is the effect on Isaiah? Besides holy fear, he is filled with the awareness of his unworthiness. Every one of his senses are overwhelmed with the glory of God and his lack of worthiness to be in the presence of that glory.

Two things make him ready for the most important prophetic role that he is being interviewed for. The first is he knows that the whole people of God are unworthy of him. They all have unclean lips. Everyone has used their lips to tear others down. Those same lips cannot proclaim prophetic words as they are. They must be purged. That happens with the burning coal placed on his lips by the Seraph. That coal is so hot, even the angels take it from the altar with tongs. This is the fire of purgatory. It is the fire of the love of God which is so hot it burns the hate and the prejudice and the judgement and the gossip and the unfaithfulness from our hearts and minds and souls.

The coal purges his sins before he comes into the presence of God. This will be our experience before we can be made ready to enter heaven. This is purgatory, where our sins are cleansed or purged away. The fires of hell are the same, except those who are there have made themselves unable to be cleansed. They experience the pain of that heat but without its healing mercy, which they have rejected.

Isaiah will then be enabled to proclaim the birth and life and saving life of Jesus himself. His disciples will be purged by the persecution they will undergo for his name sake.

## **Matthew**

The disciples do not appreciate how harshly Jesus will be rejected. His enemies will seek to destroy him in the belief that, if he is not from God as he claims, then he must be from Satan. The hatred is extreme. This should be noticeable to us today. The world hates Jesus so much that it makes up lies about him. The world claims that it is HE who is full of hatred, therefore his followers must be as well.

Unlike other religions, the follower of Christ becomes like him. It is tempting to stop preaching the gospel or to soften its message to make things easier and protect us from suffering. But Jesus entrusts the full gospel message to his disciples, which others need for their salvation.

Early on, Jesus asked his disciples not to speak of him. Then he sent them out to specific towns with direct instructions. Now he will tell them that they are to bear the full gospel message to the world without holding back. Shout it from the rooftops. Remember that the worst thing our enemies can do is kill the body.

You and I may see ourselves as separate from the martyrdom which has taken place throughout history of Christianity, but many ordinary Christians are being killed even today. Our fear should be a healthy one, the kind of awe that overwhelmed Isaiah. It is awe or fear of the Lord, who has the power over body and soul. In the face of persecution, Jesus will defend us before the Father, not like a lawyer, but as the He who is one with the Father. He will be our judge. Thank God for that.

### **Conclusion/Call to Action**

Today's Gospel opens our eyes to the unavoidable fact the student may, at times, be misunderstood, face obstacles or even be persecuted for declaring himself a follower of Christ.

It should not escape us that he is telling his disciples, now as then, to expect this and to not be afraid of those who can only kill the body. Not all are called to physical martyrdom, but all are called to proclaim courageously in whatever way God provides for us to do so.

I conclude with the words of St. Clement of Rome: "We praise you through the High Priest and Guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and majesty to you, both now and from generation to generation and for evermore. Amen."

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *O God, come to my assistance. O Lord, make haste to help me!*

**Collect:** *O Lord, for those who glory in you as their creator and guide, grant that you may restore what you have created and keep safe what you have restored.*

**Isaiah:** *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs in attendance called to one another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. The thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips. Yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the seraphs flew to me holding a live coal, taken from the altar with tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us*

**Psalms:** *The Lord is king. He is robed in majesty. He has established the world. It shall never be moved. You are from everlasting. Your decrees are very sure.*

**Matthew:** *Jesus said to his disciples: "A disciple is not above the teacher. It is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! So have no fear of them. Nothing is secret that will not become known. What I say to you, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Not one sparrow will fall to the ground apart from your Father. So do not be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows. Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven."*