

Why Me?

As my priestly ordination approaches, sometimes I pause to reflect and ask myself this question: why me? Why was this grace given to me and not to my other brothers or to others more skilled? This was not something I concocted for myself and even at a certain point in my life I was running away from it.

You could also ask yourself the same question: why did I receive the gift of faith and why did he choose me to proclaim the Gospel because that mission is for all of us.

The disciples must have asked the same question in our Gospel today. Why me? Mary Magdalene and the two disciples from Emmaus had already appeared to them announcing the Lord's Resurrection—but they would not believe. Indeed, they were stubborn of heart!

Yet despite all this doubt the greatest shocker comes to them all when Jesus says: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature." Jesus entrusted the salvation of the world to **these men**? To these men who doubted, who are "uneducated and ordinary men"? To men who abandoned him? We can only imagine what was going through their minds: Why me?

Indeed, the message of salvation, the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ was entrusted to them because of their weakness.

The apostles would eventually realize this truth. And for sure, St. Paul got it. "On my behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses." It is true that God uses our strengths for his glory. If you read the letters of St. Paul you can see the complexity and depth of St. Paul's writing because he was a great rabbi, taught under the greatest rabbis of the time Gamaliel. St. Paul's writings are so complex that even St. Peter says: There are some things in them hard to understand (2 Pet 3:16).

"On my behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses."

Paul came to this conclusion because he experienced what he called a 'thorn in his side'. We are not sure what this thorn is exactly, maybe a blindness or some nagging illness—whatever it was he begged the Lord to take it away. But this was the message he received:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Then it clicked for Paul. He realized that his weakness was not a hindrance for God but actually his weakness created a space for God to act more powerfully. So he continues:

I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

St. Paul got it. The apostles got it: Why are you amazed at this, and why do you look so intently at us as if we had made him walk by our own power or piety?

Why me? God chose the apostles, he chose you and me, and “we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us” (2 Cor 4:7).

God loves to choose the weak of this world to shame the strong so that all may know that this is the work of God and give glory to him. When people saw St. Thomas Aquinas they would call him the ‘Dumb Ox’ but his mentor St. Albert the Great would say, “We call this man a dumb ox, but his bellowing in doctrine will one day resound throughout the world.”

God is calling you to preach the Gospel with prudence, with charity and with no fear so do not deny God the opportunity to work his power in your weakness.

“Consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; ²⁷ but...God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; ³¹ therefore, as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord (1 Cor 1:26-31).”