

Homily for the 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 10, 2019
By Deacon Nick Thompson

I came to St Edward in August of 2001. I had been a Deacon since January of 1999 about two years and eight months when I came face to face with the truth. Father Joe Gietl was our pastor then and I would go to him for reconciliation and spiritual direction every two weeks. After I had been here about three months I went in for my usual reconciliation. I rattled off my sins as usual and the truth hit me like a brick. Fr. Joe said, "When was the last time you made a good confession? When was the last time you truly sat down and made an honest examination of your conscience? Because you've been coming here to me for confession for the last three months and not a single thing has changed. The same litany of sins over and over. No new ones come, no old ones go. I'm beginning to think you have no intention whatsoever of changing anything. So why not at least stop saying all that stuff about intending to sin no more or just add that lie to your list. Maybe deacon you have never made a good confession. Don't bother with penance just go in peace your sins are forgiven." What do we do when the truth slams us in the face?

I would wager to say that the Prophet Isaiah had been to the temple hundreds of times before that fateful day. The day the truth, that

God is real, that mercy is real, that reconciliation is real, smacked him in the face. Just another day in the temple when suddenly angels, Seraphim begin singing “Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts; an earthquake shakes the building and all the earth is filled with his glory. Isaiah is smacked in the face by the truth that God is real. His first thought, “Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips, yet my eyes have seen the King, the lord of hosts! Luckily for him and for us, it is never too late for our hearts to burn for the Lord. Reconciliation is real! Isaiah’s mouth is touched by the angel just as our ears are touched by words of forgiveness spoken by the priest, “See, now that this has touched your lips your wickedness is removed, your sin purged.” Mercy is real! What did Isaiah do when faced with the truth? The Lord said “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? Isaiah replied, “Here I am, send me!” Isaiah sings with psalm 138, “I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my heart, for you have heard the words of my mouth; in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise; I will worship at your holy temple and give thanks to your name.”

Professional fishermen Peter, Andrew, James, John worked hard all night and caught nothing, exhausted but listening intently to the word of God spoken by Jesus. The crowds are pressing in to hear so Jesus gets in Peter’s boat they cast off and he continues to speak from the boat. Perhaps he is teaching about Isaiah the Prophet and his call to serve God,

his awakening to the truth. Simon Peter hears the word of Jesus, "Put out into the deep water and lower your nets for a catch." This the word of a carpenter and yet Peter finds himself at the edge of truth, the edge of faith, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." And as the fish are pulled in the truth hits Peter, Andrew, James and John like a tsunami, they "fell at the knees of Jesus and said, 'Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man.'" When faced with the truth these men like Isaiah, "left everything and followed him." They saw truth face to face and put off into the deep to become fishers of men. They too sang psalm 138, "All the kings of the earth shall give thanks to you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth; and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord: 'Great is the glory of the Lord!'"

Paul too came face to face with the truth, "Last of all, as to one born abnormally, he appeared to me. For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective. Paul joins in the verses of psalm 138, "Your right hand saves me. The lord will complete what he has done for me; your kindness, O Lord, endures forever; forsake not the work of your hands.

These men came face to face with the truth and changed forever the direction of their lives. They reacted to the truth with a burning desire

for reconciliation, for mercy and forgiveness. Perhaps, the question we should ask ourselves is, "Have we like those men in today's readings recognized the truth or are we still just going through the motions?" When faced with the truth, "Will we throw ourselves on the mercy of the court, kneel at his feet, bury our old lives and begin fresh and new?" It's never too late to burn for the Lord. Even those who persecute the Lord can turn to Him. He will provide the courage necessary to leave our old comfort zone behind, to set out into the deep and become fishers of men. As for me, I went back into the church sat for hours examining my conscience went back into the confessional and made my first good confession. I hope to continue living and singing the truth of psalm 138, "In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord. Because of your kindness and your truth; for you have made great above all things your name and your promise." August 17, 2013 my best friend, a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek, went to heaven and is waiting for me there. I hope one day to see him and thank him for helping me to see the truth face to face.