

Has anyone of you sitting here in the pews at St. Pius felt unworthy to be in the presence of God? (pause)
This is what the 3 main characters in our readings today felt
Unworthy... not really feeling at home with God.
And now I will ask you all another question.
After feeling unworthy to be in God's presence, do you feel that there is a way to repair or improve your relationship with God? (pause)

Let's take a look at our readings.
It was a feeling of being unworthy that Isaiah, St. Paul, and St. Peter... the 3 main characters in our readings...experienced.
They all felt that God was far...too far away... and not the friend that they desperately needed in their lives.
I myself have been in that place.
I'm sure many of you also ask, Where is God in my life?
Where is God... in my life?
Let us start with the fact that God is a Father, our Father, a father always calls his own to come home.
Since he is calling me, I am confident that he loves me.
This is a relationship I can understand.
God loves me and I am called to love him.
So, let me ask one more question...
If you find your relationship with God repaired and improved, is God calling you to do something? (pause)
That is what happened to the 3 main characters in our readings.
All 3 eventually felt the presence of God and answered a call from God to do something.

In our first reading Isaiah says, "Woe is me, I am doomed, for I am a man of unclean lips, living among people of unclean lips.

Yet my eyes have seen the Lord."

Then an angel of God took an ember from the fire
and placed it on Isaiah's lips
and Isaiah was made worthy to be God's prophet.
Isaiah's lips were repaired because once again
he felt at home with God.

Isaiah then answered God's call by saying,
"Here I am, Lord. Send me."

Isaiah's unclean lips meant he was human
and unfit to speak for God,
but now he was worthy to do what God asked.
It is when Isaiah encountered the divine
that he became worthy to talk for God.

ALL of us here encounter the Divine at this altar.
And it is here that we must feel worthy to do what God asks.
ALL of us here are to lead others to abundant life in Jesus.
We are called to speak for God... that is Discipleship.

In our second reading St. Paul admits he is not fit to be an apostle
because in his youth he persecuted the Church of God in Jerusalem.
All of us know the story.

Paul was knocked from his horse, was struck blind
and in a divine way saw the grace of God himself.
In that moment he saw God as his welcoming father.
My favorite words of this reading are...

"By the grace of God, I am what I am."

Paul's sight was repaired because he repented
and he felt at home with God.

In that divine moment God's grace came alive in St. Paul...
a man who was not perfect...but now was willing to do God's work.
For the rest of St. Paul's life, he preached God's love.

The Gospel of St. Luke tells us about our third character, Peter. The story goes that 3 fishermen were called to be Apostles... Peter, James, and John. As they sat in their boat, all 3 fishermen witnessed a spectacular miracle. Jesus said, "Put into deep water and fill your nets with fish." They argued, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing." But they did as Jesus asked and their bounty of fish was more than they could ever imagine... their nets were tearing and their boat was loaded. Simon Peter, realizing he was in the presence of Divine Holiness, fell to his knees and proclaimed, "Depart from me, Lord. I am a sinful man." Peter had separated himself from God thinking he was unworthy. But God does not want separation. God is a father who is welcoming us home every moment of our lives. Peter with all his flaws was the one whom God would call to lead his church on earth. And Jesus said, "Peter be not afraid. From now on you will be catching men." Jesus was sent by God to show Peter how to have a relationship with God his Father. When they brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. All 3 main characters in our readings... Isaiah, Paul, & Peter... admitted that they were sinners. All 3 also realized that God was willing to forgive them of their sins unconditionally. All 3 placed their confidence in God...not themselves... to be able to do good things.

All 3 found that God could make the unworthy...worthy to do his work.
That should give us all Hope.
It is always time to start serving God.
Do we wait for a hot coal to the lips...
or be struck blind falling off a horse...
or be sent out fishing?

It just so happens that our answer to this question
is right here at this 9am Mass this weekend.
Our life of service to God today begins with three Baptisms.
At the 9am Mass... Erick Howell & Barbara McGregor
bring their 9-month-old daughter, Charlette...
August & Valerie Just bring their 2-year-old son, Harvey...
and Andrew & Jessica Moorhead bring their 4-year-old son, Easton.
Can a 9-month, a 2-year, & a 4-year-old serve God?
In my mind who can better show trust & innocence than a child?
These children are not alone.
The parents are asked to be the best of teachers.
The godparents are there to help the parents.
ALL of the St. Pius Community are asked
to help raise these children in the faith.

At these Baptisms we see God asking all of us
to share in his mission of building Heaven on Earth.
Our Catholic faith is built on the idea
of community and helping one another.
Our call to serve God is both earthly & spiritual so,
we are challenged to respond to the question Isaiah heard.
"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,
Who shall I send?"
Our answer, "Here I am, Lord, send me."