

5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 9 FEBRUARY 2025



COLLECT

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care,
that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace,
they may be defended always by your protection.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Conversion to the Lord comes in many forms. Sometimes it is sudden and dramatic. Often it is a quiet maturing of our convictions. Conversion also has many causes. Sometimes it is an experience of the numinous. Often it is an encounter with a person of faith.

- Isaiah had a vision and an experience of God's holiness which purified him and gave him courage. He became a great prophet.
- Paul reminds the people of Corinth of his own dramatic conversion when he was blinded by light and heard the voice of Christ.
- Peter, James and John met Christ at the lakeside, experienced his power, and then accepted his invitation to follow him.

Today's readings invite the assembled faithful to reflect on their own conversion. Did it begin in infancy with baptism and slowly mature as the years have passed? Was it a more dramatic conversion experience later in life? How has this conversion to Christ changed their life? Where is it leading them now?

A reading from the prophet Isaiah 6:1–8

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord seated on a high throne; his train filled the sanctuary; above him stood seraphs, each one with six wings.

And they cried out one to another in this way,

'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.
His glory fills the whole earth.'

The foundations of the threshold shook with the voice of the one who cried out, and the Temple was filled with smoke. I said:

'What a wretched state I am in! I am lost,
for I am a man of unclean lips
and I live among a people of unclean lips,
and my eyes have looked at the King,
the Lord of hosts.'

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding in his hand a live coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. With this he touched my mouth and said:

'See now, this has touched your lips,
your sin is taken away,
your iniquity is purged.'

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:

'Whom shall I send?
Who will be our messenger?'

I answered, 'Here I am, send me.'

First Reading

In this reading we encounter seraphs. They are an especially splendid group of angels.

Isaiah's glimpse of the awe-inspiring glory of God shakes the foundations of the Temple and shakes Isaiah himself to the very core of his being. *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts...* When we hear the song of the seraphs in this reading or sing it ourselves at Mass, we too should experience the sacred presence of our God.

The experience made Isaiah sharply aware of his own unworthiness. Then his unclean lips are purified with a burning coal, and he is given the courage to respond. The voice of the Lord asks: *Whom shall I send?* Humbly and confidently, Isaiah replies: *Here I am, send me!*

This powerful story, powerfully proclaimed, certainly calls the assembly to encounter God and come to conversion. Work hard at this reading, with its different voices, its poetry, its excitement and vision, so that those who listen may come to experience a renewal and a change of heart. When you are finished the reading, will they too be able to say, *Here I am, Lord, send me?*

Responsorial Psalm Ps 137:1–5, 7–8

R. In the sight of the angels
I will sing your praises, Lord.

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
you have heard the words of my mouth.
Before the angels I will bless you.
I will adore before your holy temple. **R.**

I thank you for your faithfulness and love
which excel all we ever knew of you.
On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul. **R.**

All earth's kings shall thank you
when they hear the words of your mouth.
They shall sing of the Lord's ways:
How great is the glory of the Lord! **R.**

You stretch out your hand and save me,
your hand will do all things for me.
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands. **R.**

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 137/138 is a hymn of praise for God who comes to our aid with faithfulness and love. The words of thanks and praise in this psalm are a fitting response to Isaiah's vision of God's glory. Perhaps the last line of the third stanza best sums up the mood of this psalm: *How great is the glory of the Lord!*

We sometimes speak of our earthly liturgy as a participation in the liturgy of heaven. The multitude of the heavenly throng sing God's praises. And so do we. This psalm, well proclaimed with joy and exultation, will enhance our prayers of praise and the thankfulness of our hearts.

The unfamiliar response with its grammatical inversion – *In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord* – may need some extra attention.

**A reading from the first letter of
St Paul to the Corinthians 15:1– 11**

[Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, the gospel that you received and in which you are firmly established; because the gospel will save you only if you keep believing exactly what I preached to you – believing anything else will not lead to anything.

Well then,] in the first place, I taught you what I had been taught myself, namely that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; and that he was raised to life on the third day, in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared first to Cephas and secondly to the Twelve. Next he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died; then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles; and last of all he appeared to me too; it was as though I was born when no one expected it.

[I am the least of the apostles; in fact, since I persecuted the Church of God, I hardly deserve the name apostle; but by God's grace that is what I am, and the grace that he gave me has not been fruitless. On the contrary, I, or rather the grace of God that is with me, have worked harder than any of the others;] but what matters is that I preach what they preach, and this is what you all believed.

[Short Form: omit text in brackets.]

**A reading from the holy Gospel
according to Luke 5:1–11**

Jesus was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats – it was Simon's – and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.' 'Master,' Simon replied 'we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when

Second Reading

For the third week in a row, the Lectionary offers the choice of a full or abbreviated text for the second reading. The shorter text omits Paul's testimony to his conversion by the power of God's grace. Since reading the longer version takes less than a minute extra, it is worth retaining in full.

The reading begins with an exhortation to hold fast to the gospel they have received. The passage concludes with Paul's account of God's extraordinary grace which brought him to Christ.

In between, Paul takes the people of Corinth and us into the heart of the paschal mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. This reality was experienced by Cephas, the apostles and a large group of the first disciples. It is the mystery by which we too die to sin and rise to new life with Christ.

The reader should pronounce 'brothers' as 'brothers and sisters' each time it occurs. Paul's writing juxtaposes ideas and constructs some complex sentences. Take careful note of the semi-colons in this reading which will help you to separate the elements of his thought.

Gospel

This dramatic account of the conversion of the first disciples begins with a charming and picturesque scene. It is easy to imagine the crowd jostling him to the water's edge. His inspired solution was to hop in a boat and teach the people from there!

Then in the second dramatic scene, the reluctant fisherman Simon threw back the nets he was washing and scored a huge haul of fish, enough to fill two of the boats.

In the third scene, we see in Simon the same reaction that we saw with Isaiah. His encounter with something beyond the ordinary makes him conscious of his own unworthiness. And then the moment of conversion. Jesus says, do not be afraid; come with me. And that is just what Simon and his partners do.

A simple and honest telling of this story, with a touch of wonder and amazement, can lead the listeners to recognise their own moment of conversion. The disciples left everything to follow Christ. Why do we hold back?

these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point.

When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.' For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch.' Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

May the God of all consolation order our days in his peace and grant us the gifts of his blessing.

Amen.

May he free us always from every distress and confirm our hearts in his love.

Amen.

So that on this life's journey we may be effective in good works, rich in the gifts of hope, faith and charity, and may come happily to eternal life.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on us and remain with us for ever.

Amen.

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Ordinary Time IV, Roman Missal p. 716)

An alternative translation of the scripture readings is given here from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). This may be particularly useful for those in parishes which use the NRSV Lectionary.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING (NRSV)

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah 6:1–2, 3–8

In the year that King Uzziah died,
I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty;
and the hem of his robe filled the temple.
Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings.
And one called to another and said:
“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”
The pivots on 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 that had been taken from the altar
with a pair of 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?”
And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (NRSV)

Psalm 138.1-2a, 2b-3, 4-5, 7c-8 (R.1b)

R. In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.

I give you thanks, O Lord,
with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
I bow down toward your holy temple.
I give thanks to your name
for your steadfast love and your faithfulness. **R.**

For you have exalted your name
and your word above everything.
On the day I called, you answered me,
you increased my strength of soul. **R.**

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth.
They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
for great is the glory of the Lord. **R.**

You stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.
The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands. **R.**

SECOND READING (NRSV)

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians 15:1–11

[I would remind you,] brothers and sisters,
[of the good news that I proclaimed to you,
which you in turn received, in which also you stand.
This is the good news through which also you are being saved,
if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—
unless you have come to believe in vain.
For] I handed on to you as of first importance
what I in turn had received:
that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,
and that he was buried,
and that he was raised on the third day
in accordance with the scriptures,
and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

Then Christ appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time,
most of whom are still alive, though some have died.
Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.
Last of all, as to one untimely born, Christ appeared also to me.

[For I am the least of the apostles,
unfit 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 toward me has not been in vain.
On the contrary, I worked harder than any of the apostles—
though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.]
Whether then it was I or they,
so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

[Short Form: omit text in brackets.]

GOSPEL (NRSV)

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke 5:1–11

While Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret,
and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God,
he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake;
the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.

Jesus got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon,
and asked him to put out a little way from the shore.
Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.
When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon,
“Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.”
Simon answered,
“Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing.
Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.”
When they had done this,
they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break.
So they signalled their partners in the other boat
to come and help them
and they came and filled both boats,
so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it,
he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying,
“Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!”
For Simon Peter and all who were with him were amazed
at the catch of fish that they had taken;
and so also were James and John sons of Zebedee
who were partners with Simon
Then Jesus said to Simon,
“Do not be afraid;
from now on you will be catching people.”

When they had brought their boats to shore
they left everything and followed Jesus.