

When God calls, say yes and step forward

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Epiphany + 5 – Isa 6, Ps 138, 1 Cor 15, Lk 5

Would a divine experience scare you, or would you feel uplifted and transformed – that now you can do extraordinary things. ^{Ps138.3} *At a time when I called to you, you gave me answer: and put new strength within my soul.* I hope you would feel uplifted, because a divine encounter often amounts to a tap on the shoulder. ... Like Isaiah and Simon Peter, *you're* called – you particularly, and not so much to a particular task as to a completely new life.

Today, we heard about God's call to Isaiah, and Jesus' call to Simon Peter. Both felt completely unsuited to their call: Isaiah – I'm 'a man of unclean lips', and Simon; 'leave me for I'm a sinner'. Each has a vision of God, and each feels scared, inadequate and unworthy. But as Paul says in 1 Cor 15, self-reliance is not a true measuring stick. ¹⁰*I worked harder than any ... **though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.***

So we've just seen Isaiah called to the life of a prophet, and Simon Peter sent out to the life of an evangelist. They're callings which come both from within them, and from without; *they* were the ones singled out; specifically *they* the called.

Neither Isaiah nor Peter ended up having a life you'd call a party, but a life filled with purpose, challenge, seeing lives transformed, and the world turned upside down – I doubt they'd have swapped it for anything.

When we know this universe has a loving, enabling God, life is

different; we don't judge ourselves the same way. Isaiah and Peter found themselves in the presence of the divine and automatically thought of themselves as unworthy. But that wasn't God's view of Isaiah – or Jesus' view of Peter; and ultimately, learning on the job, their understanding changed too. God is more broad-minded than we imagine.

So does God want something from you and me? I think the answer is yes. God wants us to see ourselves differently; positively.

An experience of the divine – a clear call – is for many people and congregations unique. Or maybe there'll be two moments in life when we are offered *ourselves*; offered a new way of seeing who we are and who we're called to be. The thing we learn from today's scriptures is that, in a choice between our own self-judgement and God's love for us, God is right. So when God calls, we must remember that. Say yes, and step forward into the adventure that only this lifetime can know. Amen.