

## February 9<sup>th</sup>, Proper 5

### Opening Prayer:

God all holy,  
earth and heaven are full of your glory,  
and even a glimpse of it is more than we can bear.  
Give us to recognize your power at work in your Son  
and join the apostles and prophets  
as heralds of your saving word.  
We ask this through your Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Isaiah 6:1-8:** *In this reading Isaiah has a vision of God enthroned, surrounded by courtiers, with seraphs, hovering above Him, guarding Him. One pair of wings covered their faces in the awesome presence of God, a second covered their feet, and the third is used to fulfil commissions from God. Isaiah wrote that he felt totally inadequate in God's presence: he felt unclean, unfit to stand before God, yet God graciously permitted it. An agent of God purified him, rendering him fit and qualified to speak God's word to His people. God conferred with His advisors asking whom He should send. Isaiah volunteered to be God's prophet.*

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: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. 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!’

**1 Corinthians 15:1-11:** *Paul heard that there are those in Corinth who believed that only the spirit mattered, not the body. He then recited his own personal Creed: that Christ died a bodily death and was raised a bodily resurrection, having appeared to various apostles and members of the Church. Last of all, Paul wrote that the risen Christ even appeared to him, though he was a monster in persecuting the Church. All of this is because of God’s grace.*

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, 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 he 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 someone untimely born, he 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 towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—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.

**Luke 5:1-11:** *The Lake of Gennesaret is the Sea of Galilee. Jesus commandeered Peter’s boat to continue preaching the Word to those on the seashore. Then he told Peter to sail out into the sea and lower his nets. After a night of catching nothing Peter took Jesus at his word (always a good idea!) and lowered them. They caught so much fish their nets began to break! Note how Peter’s address of Jesus changed: from “Master” (Teacher) to an act of faith, “Lord.” Like Isaiah, he expressed his unworthiness of being in Jesus’ presence. Jesus responded gracefully: calling Peter to follow him, which he, James and John did.*

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. He 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 to 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 he 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 him.

*Fishing was potentially lucrative and always difficult. Fishermen tend to be superstitious in an almost religious sort of way. If you stop and think about it for a second, you can understand it. You can't see what you're trying to catch. You're at the mercy of the wind, the waves, the seasons, the unpredictability of fish. They didn't have sonar to locate the fish or GPS to guide them reliably to a location. They had to rely on experience, instinct, and a lot of dumb luck.*

*The luck apparently wasn't that good that night. They had labored through the whole night and caught nothing. It's frustrating, tiring, tedious. You likely have the same experience in your vocation. You work like crazy and have nothing to show at the end of the day, or sometimes longer. I'm sure the fishermen were not in a terribly good mood on the seashore that day as they cleaned their nets for the next night. They were probably just eager to get the chores done so they could catch some sleep. And here is Jesus, wanting to borrow Simon's boat so he could use it as a pulpit. What's a fisherman to do?*

*So they push Simon's boat out a bit, and Jesus sits down and teaches the people. Luke doesn't record a word of what Jesus said (don't you wish he had?), but he tells us that when Jesus finished speaking, He turns to Simon and says, "Let's go fishing. Put the boat out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."*

*There's a command and a promise, if you will. Put out the boat, let down your nets. And there will be a catch.*

*So out go the nets, and what do you suppose happened? The fish swim into the nets like moths drawn to the light! The nets are busting full of fish, and the boats are in danger of sinking under the weight of all of them. And for a moment at least, Simon and the rest of the fishermen must have been thinking, "This is great! The ultimate fish locator. We could be rich." But Simon Peter looks at all the flopping fish in the boat, and he looks at Jesus, and this big tough fisherman falls to his knees in humility and says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."*

*That is faith talk too – recognizing that we stand in the presence of a holy God, recognizing that in Jesus this holy God has become one of us and stands in our midst, that He is the Lord of creation whom the wind and waves and even the fish obey. Simon knew his sinfulness. It wasn't just a matter of sins, the coarse word here, the fights with his brother, the bickering with his wife, his greed for gain, his discouragement over a fruitless night of labor, or whatever. He doesn't simply say "I have sinned," but "I am a sinner." That's what he is. That's what you and I are as well.*

*Isaiah had that same recognition when he came to the temple in the critical year when King Uzziah died, and he had a vision of the Lord sitting upon His throne surrounded by those mysterious six-winged creatures called seraphim – fire angels. It must have been an amazing vision, not only to see but to hear their eternal worship – Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." The sound of it shook the foundations of the temple under Isaiah's feet as the smoke of incense filled the place.*

*Don't be afraid, dear baptized believer. Not of death or life, nor angels, powers, the past, the present, the future, not height or depth or anything in all creation. You are in the same boat with Jesus.*

*Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

### **Concluding Prayers**

Let us pray for peace in all lands and in the hearts of all people, and for Charles, our king, and all in positions of authority around the world,

Let us pray for all who are Christians, that they may be strong in their love and faith and may work together for greater unity.

Let us pray for all members of our civic community, that we may live together with justice and understanding.

Let us pray for the sick and the dying, and for those who are bereaved.

God all-holy,  
earth and heaven are full of your glory,  
and even a glimpse of it is more than we can bear.  
May we recognize your power at work in your Son  
and join the apostles and prophets  
as heralds of your saving word.  
Grant this through your Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**For our Parish.**

O GOD the Holy Ghost, Sanctifier of the faithful:  
Sanctify this parish by thine abiding presence  
especially at this time when some feel they cannot gather together.  
Enlighten the minds of thy people more and more  
with the light of the everlasting Gospel.  
Bring erring souls to the knowledge of God our Saviour;  
and those who are walking in the way of life,  
keep steadfast unto the end.

Give patience to the sick and afflicted,  
and renew them in body and soul.  
Guard from forgetfulness of thee those who are strong and prosperous.  
Increase in us thy manifold gifts of grace,  
and make us all to be fruitful in good works;  
O blessed Spirit, whom with the Father and the Son together  
we worship and glorify, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

### **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:  
And the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you  
always. *Amen*