

**My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,**

**One of the most important theology books of our time, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, is a children's book. It's about a little boy for whom nothing goes right. The story opens with these words:**

**“I went to sleep with gum in my mouth and now there's gum in my hair, and when I got out of bed this morning I tripped on the skateboard, and by mistake I dropped my sweater in the sink while the water was running, and I could tell it as going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day...I think I'll move to Australia.**

**In the car pool Mrs. Gibson let Becky have a seat by the window. Audrey and Elliott got seats by the window too. I said I was being smushed. I said, if I didn't get a seat by the window, I'm going to be carsick and throw up. No one ever answered. I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.**

**And that's just the way it turned out. That night the little fellow said, “It has been a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. My Mom says some days are like that...even in Australia.”**

**Has anyone here ever had “a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day”?**

**Apparently that's the kind of day that Simon, his brother, Andrew, and James, and John had had—a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. They were fishermen—not sport fishermen. This was their livelihood. It was how they afforded their homes and fed and cared for their families.**

**As Jesus of Nazareth was teaching by the lakeside, the crowd had grown so large that he was pushed back into the water. He noticed these three defeated, worn-out, beaten-down men washing their fishing nets, he walks over, steps into Simon's boat, and asks him to “put out a short distance from the shore”. While it's nice to think that Simon said something like, “Sure, no problem”, having come to know him from some of his other encounters in the Gospels as an outspoken, shoot-from-the-lip kind of guy, it's entirely likely, he said, especially because he was tired, something like, “You better get out of my boat before I throw you overboard.” In any event, he agrees, and then, after Jesus finishes speaking, he tells Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.”**

Again, I think, for our tender ears, St. Luke sanitizes Simon's response: "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." Then, with the huge catch of fish, Simon recognizes he is encountering the holy. He knows who and what he is. A rough, beaten-down, worn-out fisherman who had more terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days than good ones, he falls at the knees of Jesus, and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."

But the Lord doesn't depart. He isn't fazed by Simon Peter's confession of sin. Rather, he says, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." Overcoming their fear and apparently overwhelmed by the power of the Lord's presence, Luke tells us, "they left everything and followed him."

In our first reading, the prophet, Isaiah, had a similar reaction when he encountered the holy: "Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips".

Likewise, in our second reading, St. Paul expresses his unworthiness in his encounter with the holiness of God, "For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

What is so important for us to realize is that God does not call perfect people, who live perfect lives, to proclaim his presence in our midst. And the almost universal, human response in our encountering "the holy" in our lives, is our sense of our own unworthiness. For, far too many of us, that is our "cop-out" in our unwillingness to step forward and serve. Even when we know, deep in our hearts, that God is calling us to something more in serving Him and His People, we content ourselves by saying: "I'm not good enough!" or "Someone else is better suited than me."

Well, I have news for you. It saddens me to inform you of the death of one of our most valued members—Someone Else.

For many years as a part of this church, Someone Else did far more than a normal person's share of the work. Whenever there was a job to do, a class to teach, or a meeting to attend, everybody said, "Let Someone Else do it." Whenever leadership was mentioned, this wonderful person was looked to for inspiration as well as results, "Someone Else can work with that group".

It was common knowledge that Someone Else was among the most generous givers. Whenever there was a financial need, everyone assumed Someone Else would make up the difference.

**Now Someone Else is gone! We wonder what we are going to do. Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow, but who is going to follow it? Who is going to do the things Someone Else did?**

**Someone Else was holy. Someone Else never had a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. Someone Else was never too busy, didn't have other obligations, or family problems. But, Someone Else is dead!**

**Is there anyone here, when the Lord asks "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" who will answer with Isaiah, "Here I am. Send me!"**

**Fortunately, we are blessed today, in**

**Whom we will send to Archbishop Chaput next Saturday evening, seeking to be baptized and/or confirmed in faith with us at the Easter Vigil. They have been studying and praying for the past six months to discern God's Will for them. Now, they are ready to ask our Archbishop's blessing to be baptized and confirmed in faith with us to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Shortly, we will ask you to pray for them, that the Holy Spirit will come upon them in power to take up the mission of the Church—to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

**Just for a moment I'd ask you to ponder what that means—to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men," he did not mean that he wanted Simon Peter to fill up the heavenly data-base with names of members or even just to fill the seats in this hall with bodies. He was calling him, as he has called us, to proclaim the Gospel.**

**But, what is the Gospel? Who's going to tell me what is the Gospel?**

**Well, according to St. Paul, as he tells us today, the Gospel is this: "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas/Peter, then to the Twelve..."**

**That, in a nutshell, is the Gospel we are called to proclaim—that Jesus Christ died for our sins; was buried; and was raised on the third day.**

**How do we proclaim it? Let me answer that by asking you another question. When we receive Christ in communion, who is it that we receive—the Crucified Christ? Or the Risen Christ?**

**It is, of course, the Risen Christ! The Crucified Christ is dead and was buried. It is the power and the person of the Risen Christ that flows throughout our being when we are united to Him in the Eucharist. When the Eucharistic words are spoken: "Take and eat.**

**This is my Body given up for you. Take this and drink of it. This is my Blood poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of Me, the Lord is telling us that we have the power of His Risen, now re-united Body and Blood, to overcome all evil in the world. That we are to give completely of ourselves in revealing to the world, the mercy of God. That is the Gospel! That is our Message! That is our Mission!**

**There is a much-overlooked part of the Mass that expresses this reality. Right after the Sign of Peace, as you sing “Lamb of God”, the priest breaks off a small sliver of the host and drops it in the chalice, saying, “May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.” It is the restoration of the Body and Blood to each other that we receive—The Risen Christ.**

**It really doesn’t matter how terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days you have; it doesn’t matter how weak and sinful you have been; it doesn’t matter whatever problems, issues, or concerns may weigh you down, as Alexander’s Mom so wisely said, “Some days are like that—even in Australia.” Your truth is that you have been called by name as surely as Isaiah, Peter, Andrew, James, and John. But your truth is even greater than theirs insofar as you, together with St. Paul, are called to proclaim the Risen Christ who lives within you, to make God’s mercy and love real to all the people in your lives.**

**As Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?”, please for the love of God and the salvation of your soul, respond as he did, “Here I am! Send me!**