

## "Never Too Late for God's Call: Saints, Sinners, and Service at Any Age"

Why did Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Pope John Paul II go to confession every week? They were not robbing banks. (Rumor has it, Pope John Paul II had a Redemptorist in Rome as his regular confessor.) I think these saints went to confession every week because they learned the lesson that Isaiah the Prophet, Paul the Evangelist, and Peter the Apostle learned: we are totally dependent upon the grace of God.

These saints knew who they were. Peter expressed it this way: "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man," while Isaiah pronounced: "I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips." They might also have had the same hesitations that we have; that God might ask of us something that we are not ready to give. God's gaze is not on this world, but on the Kingdom to come, our true home. When God looks deeply into our hearts, God sees all the talents and strengths that are uniquely yours. You can reach people that no one else can - and we may all have hidden gifts that we are not even aware of!

Oh, but I am too young, you might be thinking. Isaiah probably said the same. Oh, I have so much in my past that I am not proud of. Peter had the same reservations. I am not worthy to be called a disciple of Christ. Certainly, Saul of Tarsus was only too aware of his rebellious past. Or, we may be thinking at this moment that my best days are behind me. What could God expect out of me? But God does not see us that way. God looks upon us with tender love and hopefulness.

I like to conclude with a story of a man named Harry Lipzig. He was a lawyer, but he did not practice law. He ran the shop. He worked the business end of the firm. But that changed when Harry took on a case when he was 88 years old. It was the case of a woman whose 71-year-old husband was struck and killed by a drunken city employee driving his city vehicle. She was suing the city for the future earnings that she was deprived of due to her husband's death.

The city thought they had a solid case. What was a 71-year-old going to earn, anyway? Their clever case was undermined however, when they realized that the woman had hired an 88-year-old lawyer. She was awarded \$1.25 million.

The truth is, the world still needs prophets. We still need people to express what is noble and deepest within us. The world still needs people who do not merely catch fish, but catch people in the unconditional love of God. The voice of God can come to us at any age and asks us the same question asked to Isaiah: "Whom shall I send? Who will go for me?" Scripture prompts us to answer: "Here I am, Lord; send me."

Blessings,

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