

**ORDINARY SUNDAY V “C”      FEBRUARY 9/10, 2013**

**Anointing of the Sick**

God’s call to discipleship as his anointed witnesses in building the Kingdom on earth permeates all three readings today. We hear the call of Isaiah in the first reading. St. Paul recounts his dramatic call in the second reading. In the Gospel it is Jesus’ call to his first disciples Peter, Andrew, James and John. Each call is met with an acknowledgement of weakness on the part of those called. Isaiah states, “Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips.” Paul given his past persecution of the church emphatically states, “I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle.” Peter in the Gospel tells Jesus, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” Yet each of these individuals went on to give great witness to God. Here is the great paradox of faith ultimately revealed by the crucified Jesus. Through weakness, brokenness, smallness the power of God is revealed.

This weekend we celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick with members of our parish as they turn to the Lord in their weakness seeking his healing grace in body, mind and spirit. Wednesday of this coming week, Ash Wednesday, is the beginning of Lent. Lent is our annual preparation for the renewal of our call and initiation through baptism as Jesus’ disciples today at Easter. In the formula used for the anointing of the forehead and hands of our brothers and sister today we pray for healing and strengthening of body, mind and spirit: ***“Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin, save you and raise you up.”*** This prayer also captures our plea for healing all that is still not of Christ within us during these upcoming weeks of Lent as we approach the renewal of our baptism at Easter. Lent invites us to expose our spiritual wounds, our weakness, our brokenness, our smallness and allow the Lord to embrace us in his forgiveness and again bestow his strength through the Holy Spirit as his disciples so, we too, can go forth as witnesses.

The Lord has called each of us for his purposes. With Isaiah, Paul, Peter, Andrew, James and John we say: “Here I am Lord. Send me.”