

God has Called You (4th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A)

1 Corinthians 1:26-31—God Chose the Foolish

²⁶ For *consider your call*, brethren; *not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth*; ²⁷ but *God chose* what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, *God chose* what is weak in the world to shame the strong, ²⁸ *God chose* what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ He is the source of your life in *Christ Jesus*, whom *God made our wisdom*, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; ³¹ therefore, as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord.” (1 Cor 1:26-31)

1. Vocation: consider your “call” (Greek *klēsis*; Latin *vocationem* (1:26)
2. Election: God “chose” you (3x!) (1:27-28)
3. Wisdom: Christ is the “wisdom” (Greek *sophia*) of God (1:30)

Living Tradition

John Chrysostom: The man who is wise according to the standards of this world is really very foolish, because he will not cast away his corrupt teaching. A little learning is a dangerous thing, because it makes those who have it unwilling to learn more. The unlearned are more open to conviction, because they are not so foolish as to think they are wise... (Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* 5.2)

In human terms, it was not possible for fishers to get the better of philosophers, but that is what happened by the power of God's grace... From whence did it enter their thoughts to expect to overcome the world, unless they had seen Christ after He was risen? What? Were they beside themselves, to reckon upon any such thing inconsiderately and at random? For it goes even beyond all madness, to look, without Divine grace, for success in so great an undertaking. *How did they succeed in it, if they were insane and frenzied?* ...[How] did they undertake to go forth to so great wars, and to make their venture against earth and sea, and to strip and stand their ground so nobly, for a change in the customs of the whole world which had been so long time fixed, *they being but twelve men?* (Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* 5.5)¹

¹ In Gerald Bray, ed., *1-2 Corinthians* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VII; Downers Grove: IVP, 1999), 17. See also *NPNF1*, 12.25.

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (4th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A)

1. What does Paul mean when he speaks about the Corinthians “call” or “vocation”? How is this relevant for your life? To what has God “called” you?

For Further Reading

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (trans. F. R. Larcher, O.P.; eds. J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón; Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012).
2. Gerald Bray, ed. *1-2 Corinthians* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VI; Downers Grove, IL.: IVP, 1999).
3. George T. Montague, SM, *First Corinthians* (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).