

Here I am, send me! (Is 6:8)

By: Fr. Chiara Lubich

It is the 8th century B.C. and the people of Israel are at critical time. God, called YHWH in the Hebrew tradition, needs a prophet to speak in his name to all the people, to announce the coming liberation by Emmanuel, “God is with us.” And so God appears, in all his majesty, to Isaiah, who is praying in the temple.

There, before the grandeur of God, the prophet, deeply aware of his own nothingness and sinfulness, cries out, “I am a man of unclean lips!” (Is 6:5). But an angel, holding a burning coal taken from the altar with a pair of tongs, purifies his lips. To God’s question: “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?” (Is 6:8), Isaiah, now completely renewed by this heavenly action, can now respond: “Here am I; send me!”

Is the prophet’s offer of himself to God and act of presumption? No, because it was God who took the initiative. Isaiah is responding to a call.

Here I am, send me!

God called the prophet, and down through the history of salvation God continues to call men and women and entrust them with a particular mission. He looks on them with love: no one is significant in God’s eyes. One might think at times that his or her life is useless or meaningless. It is fully revived and redeemed, however, by God’s call addressed precisely to him and to her, as it is to me and to you: God invites us to take part in a plan of love for humanity and for all creation.

God turns to me and to you just as he did to Isaiah, to Mary, and to Peter, and each time he asks: “Whom shall I send?” God has confidence in us and invites us to be his collaborators. By saying “yes,” by repeating the “yes” of Isaiah, or Mary, and of a multitude of Christians who came before us, we can put ourselves at his disposal.

By saying “yes” to what God wants—to what he helps me understand day by day—my every action, even those seemingly insignificant, acquires value, it becomes important, because it contributes to the coming of the Kingdom of God, to the accomplishment of universal brotherhood.

In our case, too, it is not presumptuous to answer “yes”. The initiative is always God’s. God is always the first to love. Our “yes” is only a response of love to his love. He loves us first. Yes, thanks to his call, I am ready to fulfill his every desire, to work for him, and to say over and over again:

Here I am, send me!

We might not feel up to the task entrusted to us. We might feel that we have neither the ability nor the strength to carry it out.

If Isaiah had stopped to ponder his unworthiness or his own limitations, he would have kept on saying: “I am a man of unclean lips!” It seemed impossible to Mary that she could become the Mother of God when she received such an extraordinary announcement. When the apostle Peter felt called by Jesus, he spontaneously exclaimed: “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man” (Lk 5:8).

When God calls he also gives us the capability to fulfill the mission entrusted to us, “for nothing will be impossible for God” (Lk 1:37). Isaiah’s lips are purified so that he can speak in the name of God. Mary is filled by the presence of the Holy Spirit and by “the power of the Most High” (Lk 1:35). Peter is sustained in his mission to be “rock” by the prayer of Jesus himself (Lk 22:32).

Each “yes” we say will be followed by the grace we need to carry out whatever task is required by the will of God.

Here I am, send me!

In our own small way we have experienced the truth of this. In 1943, at the beginning of this experience of ours, we had understood that God loved us immensely, and we felt urged to communicate this great news to everyone: “God loves you immensely, God loves us immensely.”

Some months later, on the feast of Christ the King, we were deeply struck by the words of the liturgy for that day: “Only ask it of me, and I will make your inheritance the nations, your possession the ends of the earth” (Ps 2:8). We saw this as an appeal for unity and universal brotherhood.

As we knelt around the altar, prompted perhaps by the Holy Spirit, we said to Jesus: “You know how unity can be achieved. Here we are. If you want, use us.” It was our: “Here am I; send me!” We were still a small group then, seven or eight girls, but we had already given our answer to Jesus.

Now, sixty years later, this spirit has reached 182 nations through the life of thousands of people of the Movement. It is an experience that confirms the great things God can do if he finds people ready to respond to his invitation.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Isaiah 6:1-8

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

February 10, 2013

「我 在 這 裡， 請 派 遣 我」 (依 6:8)

盧 嘉 勒

公元前八世紀，以色列民族正處於生死存亡的關頭。希伯來人傳統稱為「雅威」的上主，正需要一位先知，以祂的名向全體人民講話，宣佈「厄瑪奴耳」（意即「天主與我們同在」）將會來拯救他們。於是，上主以祂君王的威能向正在聖殿中祈禱的依撒意亞先知顯現。

在偉大尊威的上主面前，依撒意亞先知深深意識到自己的渺小和罪咎，遂說：「我是個唇舌不潔的人！」（依 6:5）但是一位天使卻拿著鉗子，從祭台上取了一塊火炭，潔淨了他的唇。因此，這位被上主完全更新過來的依撒意亞一聽到上主詢問：「我將派遣誰呢？誰肯為我們去呢？」（依 6:8），便立即回應說：「我在這裡，請派遣我！」

先知向上主毛遂自薦，是否有點狂妄自大呢？事實並非如此，因為採取主動的那位並不是先知，而是上主，先知只是對這個召喚作出回應而已。

「我在這裡，請派遣我！」

就如上主怎樣召喚了依撒意亞先知，同樣在整個救恩史中，祂仍然繼續召喚不同世代的男女，並把特殊的使命託付給他們。上主以慈愛的目光凝視他們，因為在祂的眼中，每個人都是獨一無二的。有時我們或會以為自己的生命是沒有價值或毫無意義，然而，籍著上主對我們的召喚，我們的生命將完全獲得更新和救贖，因為祂邀請我們參與一個祂為全人類和世上萬物所定下的愛情計劃。正如上主曾向依撒意亞、瑪利亞和伯多祿發言一樣，每當祂向我們說：「我將派遣誰？」的時候，即表示祂對我們具有信心，並邀請我們成為祂的合作者。籍著跟隨依撒意亞、瑪利亞和眾多聖人聖女說「我願意」，我們可把自己完全交給上主，任從祂差遣。

上主每天都幫助我們了解祂的聖意。籍著向祂的聖意說「我願意」，我們每一個行動，即使看似微不足道，也會變得有價值及極為重要，因為它有助於天國的來臨及普世手足之情的實現。

為我們來說，當我們向天主說「我願意」時，也不算是狂妄自大，因為天主永遠是採取主動的一方。祂率先愛了我們，我們的「願意」只是回應祂對我們的愛。對，我們要感謝祂的召喚，因為我們已準備好去實現祂的每個意願，為祂工作，並重複地向祂說：

「我在這裡，請派遣我！」

我們也許認為自己擔當不起那託付給我們的任務。我們或會覺得自己既無才幹也無魄力去完成使命。

假如依撒意亞還停留在思索自己能否擔當大任，或能力是否足夠的階段，他就只會繼續不斷說：「我是個唇舌不潔的人！」，而瑪利亞也會認為自己不可能成為天主的母親，因為她所領受的確是一個前所未有的宣告。還有伯多祿宗徒，他被耶穌召喚時，也即時回答：「主，請祢離開我！因為我是個罪人。」（路 5:8）

當天主召喚我們時，祂也會賜給我們力量去完成那託付給我們的任務，「因為在天主前沒有不能的事。」（路 1:37）依撒意亞的嘴唇得到潔淨，使他能以天主之名宣講。瑪利亞充滿聖神和「至高的能力」（路 1:35）。伯多祿因著耶穌的禱告，在他作為「磐石」的使命中，堅立不移。（路 22:32）

每次我們說「我願意」時，我們都會領受一切所需要的恩寵，去履行祂的聖意。

「我在這裡，請派遣我！」

在我們微不足道的經歷中，我們也體驗過這一點。一九四三年，當我們開始這個生活經驗時，我們明白到天主無限地愛著我們，並感到有一股力量催逼著我們去向每個人傳達這個偉大的信息：「天主無限地愛著你，天主無限地愛著我們。」

幾個月後，在基督君王節的禮儀中，我們深深被當天的經文所感動：「你向我請求，我必將萬民賜你作產業，我必將八極賜你作領地。」（詠 2:8）我們把這句話看作為建設合一及普世手足之情的呼籲。

當時，我們圍繞著祭台跪下來，也許是聖神的推動所致，我們對耶穌說：「祢知道怎樣去實現合一。看，我們都在這裡。如果祢願意的話，請使用我們吧！」這就等如我們向祂說：「我在這裡，請派遣我！」。當時，我們才是一個小團體，只有七、八位女青年，但我們已向耶穌作出了回應。

六十年來，透過普世博愛運動成千上萬成員的生活見證，這個靈修精神迄今已傳播到一百八十二個國家了。這個經驗印證了一點，那就是：如果天主發現人們準備好回應祂的邀請，祂將會在他們身上施行偉大的事工。