

The Japanese seem to have a knack for technology. The transistor radio came out of Japan; the Japanese have almost an obsession with robots. If something is micro-miniaturized, it probably came out of Japan.

There is a children's book written in 1977 by a Japanese author entitled "Minna Unchi." Almost fifteen years later, it was translated into English. My niece has a copy of it. I'm assuming that a lot of kids have copies of this book.

The English title of the book, published in 1993, is "Everyone Poops."

In the first reading we hear the Prophet Isaiah receiving his call from God. Isaiah receives a vision of God, and knowing his unworthiness says:

*Woe is me, I am doomed!
For I am a man of unclean lips,
living among a people of unclean lips;*

In a certain sense, Isaiah realizes his place before God. He is not holy enough to be granted the favor of a vision of the Almighty. And there is nothing he can do to make himself worthy.

What happens to Isaiah, is that God makes him worthy.

In the second reading, from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, after going on about the Gospel message he has brought, Paul says:

*I am the least of the apostles,
not fit to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church of God.
But by the grace of God I am what I am,
and his grace to me has not been ineffective.*

Again, Paul is very well aware of who he is before God. He is "least" of the apostles, and 'unfit' to be called an apostle.

Yet, Paul is made "fit" by the grace of God.

In the Gospel, we hear another segment from the "Call of the Apostles." This time, it is Simon Peter. Jesus performs a miracle, and Peter tells Jesus:

Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.

To which Jesus says,

*Do not be afraid;
from now on you will be catching men.*

Jesus knows that His grace will be sufficient to transform this sinful fisherman into the great Apostle who spread the Faith, and is known as the first Pope.

The bottom line here, in a way similar to that 'classic' children's book that came to us from Japan is ...
EVERYBODY SINS

None of us are exempt. We all sin ... Isaiah wasn't worthy to be a prophet, Paul wasn't a fit apostle, and Peter realized his own sinfulness as an unsurmountable obstacle to being able to follow Jesus Christ.

The flip side to EVERYBODY SINS is ... God has provided the remedy Himself ... God has sent His Son Jesus Christ to redeem us ... to 'buy us back' from our own sinfulness ... Christ's sacrifice on the cross is all-sufficient to save us from our sins.

The only thing holding us back from receiving God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ is ... OURSELVES.

The infinite graces of Calvary are available to us today at this altar. Today as we receive the sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us ask for a deeper humility. In the first place, to see ourselves in relation to God ... and in the second place, to be able to receive the help we need from God that comes in the form of the grace of forgiveness.

And as we enter in ten days into the season of Lent, let us pray for a renewal of ourselves in the graces of God, so that we can take our place in the new creation as adopted children of God the Father, redeemed in Jesus Christ, and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.