

exploring

THE SUNDAY READINGS

YOUR GUIDE FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2010

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OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...You created us for happiness, Lord, in a world without end. As we journey through this valley of tears, we hold fast to the belief that joy awaits those who put their trust in you. Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

February 7 |

LECTIONARY 76C
FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 6:1–2, 3–8

I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple.

What are your wildest dreams? Chances are you wouldn't confide them to anyone but those who love you best. Our wildest dreams might sound foolish when spoken aloud, because they are often so far from our present reality as to seem totally out of reach. Love, wealth, fame, power, success, and opportunity are some of the directions our dreams might take us. It might embarrass us to share some of the mad ideas we've spent our daydreams scheming about.

Maybe for someone in a prophet's line of work, the ultimate dream is to see right into the heart of the realm of God. No more guesswork, no more mysteries, and no more veiled truths to uncover by half measures. Instead of straining for insight and illumination, wouldn't it be wonderful to have a clear view of divine presence and purpose? The year King Uzziah dies, the prophet Isaiah receives such clarity amid the swirl of confusion surrounding the succession of power. Seeing so clearly, Isaiah now understands how totally unprepared he

is for the vision he is granted.

» **What is your heart's desire, and what might it cost to obtain it?**



SECOND READING

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1–11

I am the least of the apostles; in fact, because I persecuted the church of God, I do not even deserve the name.

If you're looking for a fellow who's

absolutely driven by conviction, look no further than Saint Paul. As a Pharisee, Paul was a perfectionist within a clubhouse of purists. He wanted to know the truth at all costs and to enforce the truth to the end of his strength. Paul never met a compromise he could stand. Such people are extremely loyal—and potentially dangerous.

Paul's wildest dream was to know God's truth, and he got his wish. But boy, it wasn't what he expected. The compass he'd set for his career turned out to be pointing in exactly the wrong direction. The truth was so shocking, it made him blind for a time. It also forced him to do something that perfectionists and extremists seldom do: he changed his mind AND his life course. Paul got up from the dust of the Damascus road prepared to dedicate his life to preaching the gospel he once sought to obliterate. I wouldn't argue that this experience made him a humbler man, nor less dangerous. But now he was running a whole new race, and for the team he once opposed.

» **Have you ever gotten what you wanted—only to find it wasn't what you thought it would be?**