

Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Is. 58.7-10 1 Cor. 2.1-5 Mat. 5.13-16

This week we continue on our journey through the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapter 5 through chapter 7). Last week Jesus explained that if we were to live a certain behavior our reward or blessing was then specified. Today we continue our journey through the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus summons His disciples to be what God's people were always meant to be; salt of the earth and light of the world.

As we know salt is used to flavor and preserve food. Through living the beatitudes Jesus' disciples would become the "salt" of the earth. They become the salt of the earth by preserving the goodness in the world. We too are asked to be the salt of the earth. But what happens when salt loses its flavor. The salt would then be disregarded.

In many ways this analogy of salt relates to our faith. If we remain faithful to God, growing in our relationship with Him we like the salt remain flavorful. It is times, often difficult times that we drift or fall away from God. We lose our compass, we lose our salt if you will. We all have had difficult times in life where we struggle or seem to be perhaps caught in a rut. A feeling of abandonment in our faith perhaps. These are the times we truly need our Holy Mother Church.

The Church through all her graces can reunite or revigorate our "salt", our faith. Through her Holy Sacraments we become strengthened and reenergized. Through the Sacraments of reconciliation and Holy Communion we receive the supernatural graces which guide us to strengthen our relationships with God. God calls us to live our faith strongly and boldly. To remain strong and vigilant so we may be salt spread throughout the world.

Jesus also calls us to be a light to the World. In the Jewish tradition Israel was to be a light to the nations (Is. 60. 1-5, Bar. 4.2) Jesus calls on us to fulfill this role by living the beatitudes in such a way that the world may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. While I was reading today's Gospel I stumbled upon a prayer by St. John Henry Newman called "Radiating Christ:"

"Dear Jesus, help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Thy Spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine. Shine through me, and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus! Stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine as Thou shinest, so to shine

as to be a light to others; the light, O Jesus, will be all from Thee; none of it will be mine; it will be Thou shining on others through me. Let me thus praise Thee in the way Thou dost love best by shining on those around me. Let me preach Thee without preaching, not by words but by my example, by the catching force of the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to Thee. Amen”

Notice how St. Newman describes light using words as radiance, shine, shiniest and so to shine. St. Newman’s prayer describes a deep loving relationship with Jesus, a total surrender to Jesus. This light, this radiant light coming from Jesus through each of us is to eliminate the darkness and shine throughout the world.

In these times of darkness our light, the light of faith, hope and charity is being called upon. My friends this light Jesus is talking about is not to shine only during tragedies or sorrowful times but ALL times, always and everywhere. This light is reflected in us through our lives by our actions, how we interact with people, and by how we live our faith. We need not help people for the recognition but rather because it is the right thing to do.

In today’s first reading from Isaiah we are called to “share our bread, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked...then **light** shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become like midday.” Our community is so giving and so loving towards our neighbors it is exemplary. But our role in our community, in our world is to bring out the best in others by leading them to Christ.

Through personal witness, we the faithful become that radiant light of the world, enabling others to see the way from the darkness of sin to the splendor of heaven. Be a light, share your faith with others. Jesus uses the word light about 95 times in the New Testament. This word or description is a call for action. In today’s Gospel we are called to be the light to the world.

When we imitate Christ’s love, mercy, and generosity, the world will see our good deeds and glorify our heavenly Father (Mt. 5.16). Through our actions let our light be more radiant, brighter than a lighthouse. Let our actions be our words. Let every soul we come in contact with feel the presence of Jesus in us and through us. Let people look up and see not us but only Jesus radiating through us!