



Christ in Our Neighborhood

February 5, 2023

Prayer

Lord, our God,
by his nature, Jesus is the Light of the World and Salt of the Earth. By grace, we are called light and salt. May we be the lamp of hope for those who live in darkness. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Isaiah 58:7-10

Last week, St. Paul reminded us that if we are to boast, we ought to boast in the Lord. Indeed, Christ is in charge and we are not.

However, as Christian stewards, we do not simply stand idle and watch God do all of the work. The Lord expects us to be the light for the world and salt for the earth (see today's Gospel).

Isaiah shows us what the Lord expects of us: "Share your bread ... shelter the oppressed clothe the naked satisfy the afflicted," etc.

As we were reminded last week, it is not enough for us to keep the Law. Rather, we must remember its purpose. The Commandments are only as effective as the first Law that supports the rest: The Law of Charity!

Questions

In what way do you give bread to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, or clothing to the naked?

How do you assist the afflicted?

Commentary

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

St. Paul was a man who had a strong personality. We remember his zealous ways before his conversion to Christianity. After his conversion, he still had a zealous personality, but without violence in his heart.

This 2nd Reading shows a softer side of Paul as he declares to the Corinthians his "weakness and fear" and his "lack of sublimity of words and wisdom."

Paul's humble words had a purpose. It was a way to show that he was not some flashy preacher come to take advantage of them.

More importantly, his purpose was to show that true wisdom came from God Himself so that their faith would not rest on Paul's eloquence but on the Lord.

Sharing this humble side, he was able to move the Corinthians to accept this new Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Question

How does a spirit of humility help to spread the Gospel?

Bishop John Dolan of the Diocese of Phoenix offers this five-part series on Sermon on the Mount.

Over these five weeks, you are invited to rediscover Jesus' powerful teaching found in the Gospel of Matthew.

For more on this five part series, visit dphx.org/christ-in-our-neighborhood.

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Commentary

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

Although St. Paul offered a humble side of himself (2nd Reading), he was a strong character who knew that the Lord expected him to carry his weight.

In our Gospel, Jesus expects us to carry our weight as well. We cannot hide ourselves like a light under a lamp shade or bushel basket.

The Sermon on the Mount is a challenge for Jesus' disciples to carry the Good News of the Lord through word and deed. This is how the Gospel is proclaimed - through us!

There are many Christians who believe that their faith is a private venture and that we shouldn't push our faith on others.

Of course, we should not *proselytize* - coax, kidnap, or steal people for Jesus. On the other hand, we are called to *evangelize*; that is, to invite people to know the Lord. In this way, the Gospel can be shared from one generation to the next.

The famous American preacher, Billy Graham, once was challenged by a parent. She said, "I don't think I should bring my child to Bible study. I'm leaving it up to him to accept Jesus when he is an adult." Graham responded, "By not giving your son the Bible now, you are already teaching him something; that Jesus must not be very important to you."

Question

How are you a light for the world?

This Week's Task

How will you invite one person into a deeper relationship with Christ this week?

Perhaps you could invite one new person to join your CION small group. You could also speak from the heart with someone about how Christ gives you hope and peace in a world filled with upheaval.

Group Prayer

The group sings or says the following:

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel, no!
I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bushel, no!
I'm gonna let it shine,
Hide it under a bushel, no!
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Continue with Psalm 112

Psalm

Response: The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

Light shines through the darkness for the upright;
he is gracious and merciful and just.
Well for the man who is gracious and lends,
who conducts his affairs with justice.

R. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

He shall never be moved;
the just one shall be in everlasting remembrance.
An evil report he shall not fear;
his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.

R. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

His heart is steadfast; he shall not fear.
Lavishly he gives to the poor;
His justice shall endure forever;
his horn shall be exalted in glory.

R. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

Conclude with an Our Father