

The gospel passage we just heard comes from the... Sermon on the... The Sermon on the Mount begins with the... We did not read the Beatitudes at last Sunday's Mass, since the Feast of the Presentation took precedence. Which means we all have to go home and read the Beatitudes for spiritual reading. St. Matthew's gospel, the beginning of chapter 5.

The Beatitudes teach us where we can find true blessedness. They describe a kind of happiness that lies hidden from the world's eyes. Poor in spirit, meek, merciful, pure-hearted, longing for justice and truth—there we find the invisible happiness of inner communion with God.

In today's reading from the Sermon on the Mount, we heard the Lord command us to let a light shine that will move people to glorify God. "You are the light of the world," He tells us.

Two weeks from Wednesday, Lent will arrive. During Lent, we will celebrate the Stations of the Cross on Fridays, as we always do. A unique light shone from Christ throughout His pilgrim life. But when we imagine His bitter Passion and crucifixion, we see that light at its purest--the inner strength and serenity that Jesus possessed during His Passion.

What do we Christians believe in? We believe in that inner source that Jesus had, the divine life of the soul of Christ. That inner life gave Jesus the love by which He offered Himself to the Father, for us, on the cross. We believe that the inner source of Christ's perfect life is God. In other words, the source of Jesus' strength and serenity during the Passion—that is the God in which we Christians believe.

As we gaze at the fourteen Stations, we see that light shining in a great darkness. An intense paradox: These little sculptures depict a hideously dark sequence of events. If we didn't hold the Christian faith, we wouldn't want our children exposed to these images. When Mel Gibson made his Passion of the Christ movie, people complained about the violence. But Good Friday—the real, original day—it was an R-rated movie. If they gave a rating to our Stations of the Cross, it would have to be R.

But we look at this “movie,” and we see pure light. We have a lovely church—and, right in the center, with every architectural line converging on it—the rendition of a crucified man. To us, this is the brightest light ever to shine on earth. This is our God. Only the eye of faith can see the light of The Crucified. But we know that it shines brighter than any darkness. The Passion, more gruesome than any Hollywood horror movie... Yet we see the Light of the World shining.

That makes us the light of the world. It's good to be nice, but being nice doesn't make anyone the light of the world. It's good to be smart, but being smart doesn't make anyone the light of the world. When does our light shine before others and make them glorify our heavenly Father? When they see within us the same light that shone within Jesus on Good Friday.

The dark world needs something very desperately. Namely, our Christian interior life. We need a Christian interior life. How did Jesus give heaven to the human race? By living from the deep secret within Himself, His secret divine union with the Father.

We need to wall-off a sanctuary in our souls. We need an inner tabernacle that no exterior thing can touch. We need to cultivate the life of prayerful silence. The world needs us to do this.

How? How about at least fifteen minutes of absolute silence per day?

What is Christian meditation? It's as easy as walking quietly from one Station of the Cross to the next. Or just trying to pay attention at Mass. Or opening up the New Testament and starting to read from Matthew 1:1. Or Matthew 5:1. Or Philippians 1:1. We can't let the devil get between us and our

Bibles. Whenever anyone picks up the New Testament and reads it, the world begins to change for the better.

...Thank you for praying for our bishop and me, when we met this past Wednesday. I'm still here. Thank God.

I wish I could tell you that bishop and I solved our problem. We see this situation very differently. He regards me as an angry writer. He considers my blog posts about the problems in the Church to be a scandal THEMSELVES.

I can't see it that way. I think what I have done in my blog is: provide sober and well-documented accounts of the dishonesty of a number of bishops. I don't think I am the scandal.

I begged bishop to reconsider his position. I have no desire to become some kind of martyr for free speech at his expense. But the fact is: he had a press release ready, about our meeting, before the meeting even started.

I rejoice that I am still here with you. I wish I could promise you that this drama has ended for good. But I can't. I wish the things I wrote about on my blog weren't true. But they are. May God's will be done here.