

SALT AND LIGHT



When visiting my dad I sleep in a pitch-black room where, in a moment of utter futility, I will use the meager illumination from my watch to guide me to the door. When the song, echoing Jesus' words in Matthew, says to "let it shine," it means a light stronger than the glow from my watch.

My father gave me this advice when I was in college: when eating a meal with a possible employer – which was often the final round of interviews – *never salt your food before tasting it because that showed a rush to judgment. You may have over salted your meal.*

A pinch of salt unwraps the flavors hidden in the medley of food and spices in your meal. Eliminating salt from one's diet is a disservice to the culinary repast in front of you.

A little salt adds great value. A lot of light allows the nighttime driver to navigate back country roads. A night light allows me to move confidently in my father's guest room. Jesus said to his disciples (and us), "...your light must shine before others..."

We all have moments when clarity embraces us and we "just get it." What was once opaque is now transparent; once misassembled is now transformed.

With the gift of transformation – clarity – comes the responsibility of sharing it. Pope Francis writes that the "faith can only be communicated through witness, and that means love. Not with our own ideas but with the Gospel, lived out in our own lives and brought to life within us by the Holy Spirit. . . . It's not so much about speaking, but rather speaking with our whole lives: living consistently, the very consistency of our lives!"

Witness is not turning the spotlight on you but shining your light for others.

The Prophet Isaiah defines witness as sharing your bread with the hungry; sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them; not turning your back on your own; removing from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; bestowing your bread on the hungry and satisfying the afflicted. Provide witness and then your light shall break forth like the dawn.

Here are some specific ways to witness:

Share your bread with the hungry by donating money or inviting them to dinner.

Clothe the naked by, when you have two coats, giving one away.

Remove oppression by walking *with* the undocumented immigrant to court or praying for an end to killings from abortion, war and the death penalty and snapping a photograph to send out.

Satisfy the afflicted by simply being there for someone who is suffering, or looking at the panhandler in the eye, thereby acknowledging that he or she exists.

Looking someone in the eyes, someone who is different from you, may seem like an insignificant gift. But a little salt transforms the meal from bland to great.

Salt and light.

(Readings for the Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time)



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