



YEAR A – FEBRUARY 9, 2020

The prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 58:7-10) challenges us to "...let our light break forth like the dawn". He draws our attention to the corporal works of mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. And he reminds us that being happy requires helping other people.

For Isaiah and for Jesus, Happiness is not having what we want. Happiness is wanting what we have, and then using what we have to help those who have not. That insight alone is more than a thought for the day. It's a thought for a lifetime. It's our Lord's Way of Life.

Saint Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) speaks to us about the mystery of Christ crucified. He tells us we are redeemed by the cross of Christ, by the blood of Christ. That is true, but its only part of a larger reality. It is a half-truth (wholly true) but not the whole truth. The whole truth is we are redeemed by the love of Jesus who is the Christ. His love includes the cross, but it includes much more. It includes our Lord's whole life – from before the womb of our Blessed Lady to the tomb on earth and beyond. In fact, in one sense as Edward Schillebeeckx explains, we are redeemed "...in spite of the cross, not because of it."

When Jesus uses the word "love", it's a word that can be spelled C-A-R-E. For a moment, think of someone you love. If you care more about that person than you do about yourself, then you love that person the way Jesus loves you.

In the Gospel, (Matthew 5:13-16) Jesus reminds us that we must let our light shine for others to see. He says in effect, "Don't hide your faith on weekdays and only bring it out on weekends." Recall the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "Preach the gospel every day and only if you have to, use words."

Saint Basil, way back in the fourth century, challenged the people of his time with words that challenge us today. He said "The food left over in your cupboard, the food you throw away - belongs to the hungry, the coat unused in your closet belongs to the poor, the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the one who has no shoes, the money you hoard but don't really need belongs to the poor".

For a few moments in prayerful silence, reflect on which part of today's Scripture Readings speaks to you. Is it the part about Happiness, the part about Redemption, or the part about letting your light shine for others to see?

If you listen carefully, you can hear the voice of Jesus.

What is he saying to you?

