

2020 January 26

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Isaiah 9.1-4, "The rod of their oppressor, you have broken." (4b)

Psalm 27, "The Lord is my light and my salvation." (1a)

Second: 1 Corinthians 1.10-13, 17-18, "I appeal to you that all of you be in agreement." (10b)

Gospel: Matthew 4.12-23, "He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum". (13a)

We have work to do!

The Prophecy of Isaiah (9:1-4) is literally being fulfilled even to this day. Only the names of the places that see light is to be substituted with the names in all the corners of the earth into which the torch of Christ's light is being carried. For a while our attention was in the manger and the tiny baby therein. He is already on his way to work, inviting each of us to join him. His invitation to Peter and Andrew, John and James, is now directed to each of us, *"come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of people"* (Matthew 4:19).

'The great light has to shine on the people who walk in darkness'. We have to be the ones to lead them into this light. In and around our surroundings, in our province in our country and in our world, there is plenty of darkness and works of darkness, like euthanasia, abortion, confusions regarding sexual orientations, curtailment of freedom of speech and freedom of faith and the like. Jesus calls us to be the torch-bearers for him. His light must first permeate our own souls; then into the darkness overshadowing this world.

When we refuse to open our hands and hearts to the stranger, the alien, the immigrant, the refugee, our next door neighbor, our children, siblings, parents, our spouses, and so on, we are still in darkness and adding to the darkness in the world. When we refuse to love, to forgive and to bear with, we are still in the dark! Christ is yet to be born in our hearts and wipe away the darkness there. Then we become light to shine, and the invitation of Jesus will be responded to in and through us.

The work yet unfinished are to *'multiply the nation and increase the joy, make it joyful as with the joy at the harvest; to break the yoke of their burden, the bar across their shoulder, and the rod of their oppressor'* (Isaiah 9:3-4). 'Multiply the nation' means adding to the number of active and proactive believers in the Kingdom. This process is on ever since Jesus put his feet on the ground of this earth. Christianity has been the agent of this ongoing transformation in the world ever since and so we are in great company. Rejoice and be happy and be on the move and take courage by singing today's psalm *"The Lord is my light and my salvation"* (Psalm 27.1).