

2020 February 09

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Isaiah 58.6-10+, "Your light shall break forth like the dawn." (8a)

Psalms 112, "Light rises in the darkness for the upright." (4a)

Second: 1 Corinthians 2.1-5, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ." (2)

Gospel: Matthew 5.13-16, "You are the light of the world". (14a)

Don't be too Private

For most of us, if we look at our own self, we are too private. It is my life, my house, my property and my privacy; no encroaching, no negotiation, please! Our privacy is sacred for us and it needs respect and protection, agreed. However, for us Christians can we afford to get into this rigid position and still boast of being a believer in Jesus Christ? Did he not tell us that we are lamps lit and placed on the lamp stick in order that all may see the light and that it should not be kept under the bushel barrel? How can our privacy practice and this teaching of Jesus or this privilege bestowed on us by him go together?

In today's gospel Jesus tells that we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. If we accept his teaching we can no longer afford to be so private. Light cannot that easily be privatized; so too salt of the earth. In other words, we are made for others and not exclusively for our own self and so are not just private.

Our rulers and those wielding power are trying to banish God from our land, our world and even from our private life. The freedom to practice our religion is slowly and systematically being encroached and eliminated. Our freedom of speech and of expression and opinion are equally being reduced and done away with. Believers are gradually taking the position, and even propagating that our faith and beliefs should be strictly private and within closed walls. In other words, there should not be any public expression of faith. That is, don't be the light of the world and the salt of earth, but just be private!

Christians to be true to that name are truly in a relation with Christ and consequently with every human. Christianity does not rule out any human being from the family of God and so all are in the same relationship of being in the one and same family. The most important aspect nurtured in the family is love and that is what Christianity stands for. Love's expression is possible only in a community, which should lead us to communion. By nature Christians are commissioned and obliged to proclaim, share and witness to this love. This is what Jesus demands us through '*shining as light and becoming salt to the earth*'. In a critical conversation with a friend, a co-worker, a family member, a stranger and so on, we can shine as light and be salt to earth! Prophet Isaiah today illustrates how our lights can break forth like the dawn! (Isaiah 58:6-10).