

Ordinary Time 5A 2017

You Are the Light of the World

Last week we heard the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the eight beatitudes. Immediately after pronouncing those blessings of the kingdom, Jesus turns to his small band of disciples, and he says, *you* are the salt of the earth; *you* are the light of the world. Imagine the amazement of those disciples when Jesus the true light of the world says to them, *you* are the light of the world. We are the light of the world? O, Jesus, you must be mistaken! How can you call us, such an insignificant group of disciples, the light of the world? You don't really mean what you are saying, do you?

But Jesus insists. *You* are the light of the world because I have made you my disciples. It is not you who have decided that you are the light of the world; I, the true light of the world, have made you the light of the world. So proclaim the gospel without which the world lives in darkness. Live as children of the light, and you will be the light of the world.

St. Paul took those words seriously, and because he did he became the light of the world by proclaiming and preaching Christ crucified. And ever since, there have always been men and woman who have taken the risk of being the light of the world by what they say and do.

So how do we become the light of the world today, as a parish and as individuals? How do we make our light shine so strongly that others will praise our heavenly Father? *The prophet Isaiah* answers that question when he says: Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless, clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own. *The responsorial psalm* of today's Mass answers that question when it proclaims: "The just person is a light in the darkness to the upright." When we live according to the gospel, we become the light of the world for others.

There is yet another way that we as individuals and as a community are the light of the world: by the witness of our marriage vows. Today we celebrate the wedding anniversaries of those who were married during the months of December, January, and February. Whether you have been married for one year or twenty, five years or fifty, the faithful way in which you have kept your married promises has been a light to the world for all of us. You have shown us what it means to be faithful, what it means to fulfill your promises of love to each other. And for this we rejoice with and congratulate you.

We are the light of the world. If we remember this; and if we let our light shine forth there is no need for us to become obsessed with the flood of news that can so easily discourage us because we know what only God knows: that in Jesus Christ we are the light of the world.