

Readings: Isaiah 58: 7-10, 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5 Matthew 5:13-16



Fr Michael says:

Salt of the Earth and Light of the World

Jesus shows how He is deeply aware of the Scriptures and their meaning, in that he continues to develop a lot of the themes that are contained in it – particularly around the issues of justice and care for the poor, as we have seen in today’s reading from Isaiah, which underlines that true worship of God is shown specifically in these ways. It is God who takes the initiative in ensuring that His word is fulfilled, we are simply His instruments to achieve this. Our calling is summed up clearly in the Sermon on the Mount, through which we are working over these next weeks ‘till Lent. We need Jesus’ light to respond to the darkness which surrounds us – but it is also there to guide people – so the deeds that we do provide inspiration, light and courage to those to whom we are sent – we need constant attention to what we are doing and how we respond to situations.

Mother Teresa tells the story of the visit a man made to their Home for the poor and the dying in Calcutta. He arrived just as they were bringing in a man full of sores, who was clearly dying. He watched as one of the sisters started to clean him up – she did not know he was watching her and he saw the tender care and attention she showed him. She smiled at him as she cared for him and talked gently to him. He turned to Mother Teresa and said: “When I came here, I did not believe in God, my heart was full of hate. I leave – believing – I have seen the love of God in action”: His tender care for us in her actions of caring so lovingly for that man.”

The same thing happens in our lives: our actions may not be so visible, but rather more ordinary – we do them simply to allow their value and beauty to speak for themselves! We need to be in the world, but must not be absorbed by it – so we need to be salt to preserve our values fully, as Albert Camus said: “The world needs Christians to be Christians.” So apart from perseverance, we also need boldness and courage, to go with this gently fidelity. What we do singly, needs also to be shown in our Community, as we are essentially social beings.

“The most important things about each of us is our capacity for goodness. We can be a source of light. We have hands that can care, eyes that can see, ears that can hear, tongues that can speak, feet that can walk and above all – hearts that can love. Unfortunately, through laziness, selfishness, and cowardice, our light is dimmed, so that we become shadows of the people we could be. Lord, help us to believe in our own goodness and to let the light of that goodness shine. On seeing this light others find their way, and you will be glorified.”



Fr Jean-Marie says:

Homily 5th Sunday of the Year - A

Theme: Being Light and Salt of the world

In the Gospel from St Matthew Jesus tells his disciples that they are the light of the world. It is their task to light the way for the people toward God and to guide them home. Isaiah too, was the light of the world in his time for he spoke to the people about God and showed them how to live in the sight of God. As the successors of Isaiah and the disciples, we are the light of the world and it is our duty to proclaim Christ wherever we may be and to bring people to know him. It is our duty to help people to come to love and enjoy the word of God by being good to them, by giving them a good example. It is our duty to give people a good taste of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, by what we say and do, by the kind of behavior that we show them. Our task in the world is to live according to the Gospel so that God's light can shine in the world. Jesus gives us the mission of being his light shining in the world, the salt that preserves against corruption, spices and makes the world tasty with the aroma of the Gospel. It is a mission of being a city of light that attracts people to the Lord.

Isaiah on his side tells us today that God will be near to us and we will shine with his light if we are near to the needy around us. He gives us some concrete ways of being light for other people. If we share our bread with the hungry and shelter the homeless poor, if we give clothes to the naked, if we do away with the wicked word, if we give relief to the oppressed our light will shine like the dawn, our light will rise in the darkness and our shadows will become like noon. Our responsorial psalm stresses also the same point. We shall be light for others by being good, generous, merciful and just to them.

And Saint Paul reminds us that it is not by philosophising and making speeches that we preach Christ but by bearing witness to the crucified Lord. Faith does not depend on human power or philosophical arguments but on the power of the spirit, the power of God.

Let us pray today that we may truly become the salt and the light of the world. May the power of the spirit kindle in us the light of Jesus so that we can enlighten other people and attract them to be his disciples. Amen.