

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Feb 6th 2011

“You are the light of the world”

Reflection for V Sunday of Ordinary Time

Already, lighter mornings, lighter evenings. First signs of spring and the promise of longer days, more light, more sunshine, more warmth, new life. And how it raises our spirits, disperses the gloom, gives us fresh impetus and encourages us to renewed vigour in our daily routine. The coming of the light really does have a very positive effect on us. One can hardly imagine how the miners trapped underground for six weeks in Chile must have longed for light, or even how the people who live within the Arctic Circle must long for an end to the perpetual gloom. But we all need periods of darkness to enable us to fully appreciate light, its absolute necessity in our lives and its incalculable worth.

At the coming of Christ - God in human form - into our world, "the people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone"(Is 9:11) and the light of Christ is still shining in the world through the lives of countless followers. Each of us, called and chosen by Christ is to reflect something of Christ's own light to the people we encounter every day. He has endowed each of us with his Holy Spirit so that we can disperse some of the gloom still so prevalent in the lives of many. But, lest we lose our brightness, we must be in regular contact with the True Source itself, who alone can sustain and increase our light. So, we must establish a regular prayer pattern, and of course, try to get to know the person of Jesus through greater familiarity with the Gospels. There we shall discover how he shed his light on all the people with whom he came in contact.

As we become more familiar with the life of Jesus we discover that so much of his interaction with people is mirrored in today's first reading from Isaiah and it is what he asks his followers to do. "Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked and turn not from your own kin ... do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word give your bread to the hungry and relief to the oppressed.... THEN will your light shine like the dawn ... "That is precisely what we see Jesus doing and that is how we will allow the light of Christ to shine in us and through us. By serving our brothers and sisters, as Jesus did when he knelt and washed the feet of his disciples and when he gave his life for us in his ultimate act of service. Then, "seeing your good works", those whom you have served will "give the praise to your Father in heaven".

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