**Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Scripture Readings**

**First Reading: Isaiah 58:7-10**

Thus says the Lord: 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. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am! If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday.

**Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not in human wisdom but on the power of God.

**Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16**

Jesus said to his disciples: “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”

**Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Opening Prayer**

**Psalm 112**

**All: The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.**

**Side 1:** Light shines through the darkness for the upright; he is gracious and merciful and just. Well for the man who is gracious and lends, who conducts his affairs with justice.

**All: The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.**

**Side 2:** He shall never be moved; the just one shall be in everlasting remembrance. An evil report he shall not fear; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.

**All: The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.**

**All: His heart is steadfast; he shall not fear. Lavishly he gives to the poor; his justice shall endure forever; his horn shall be exalted in glory.**

**All: The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.**

**Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.**

***Focus of This Week’s Readings***

*Through the power of God, we can be a light to the world by our loving concern for others, especially the poor and the oppressed.*

**Closing Prayer**

**Leader:** Christ the Lord is our head; we are his members. In joy let us call out to him:

**All: Lord, may your kingdom come.**

**Reader 1:** Christ our Savior, make your Church a more vivid symbol of the unity of all mankind, make it more effectively the sacrament of salvation for all peoples.

**All: Lord, may your kingdom come.**

**Reader 2:** Through your presence, guide the college of bishops in union with the Pope, give them the gifts of unity, love and peace.

**All: Lord, may your kingdom come.**

**Reader 3:** Bind all Christians more closely to yourself, their divine Head, lead them to proclaim your kingdom by the witness of their lives.

**All: Lord, may your kingdom come.**

**Reader 4:** Grant peace to the world, let every land flourish in justice and security.

**All: Lord, may your kingdom come.**

**Reader 5:** Grant to the dead the glory of resurrection, and give us a share in their happiness.

**All: Lord, may your kingdom come.**

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Jesus, divine physician, you heal every wound and vanish every scar. You make the blind see and the deaf hear. Open my eyes to see you more clearly. Open my ears to hear you more easily. Give me the grace to serve you joyfully and draw me closer to you. Amen.**

**Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**What Does It All Mean?**

**First Reading: Isaiah 58:7-10**

Here is a straightforward description of obligation and promise. It is a charter for the Jewish people, who are, at the author’s time, newly returned to their homeland from their exile in Babylon. We may read these verses as a charter for ourselves as well. God wants us to feed the hungry, to shelter the oppressed and the homeless, to clothe the naked, to assist everyone who is needy. If we meet our responsibilities, our light will shine, our wounds will be healed, and we will be embraced in God’s glory. God rewards our fidelity, which we express most perfectly in justice.

**Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

Paul draws attention to his own limitations, as contrasted with the eloquence of other Christian preachers. Yet he also makes a claim that sounds almost arrogant: “I speak of nothing but Jesus Christ, and because of this your faith rests upon the power of God.” He tempers this apparent arrogance, however, by underlining his own weaknesses. He reminds the church at Corinth that when he had first come there he was afraid and insecure. Therefore, any good done through him was clearly God’s accomplishment.

**Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16**

The sermon on the mount occupies chapters five through seven in Matthew’s account of the gospel. After opening with the beatitudes, Jesus continues with descriptions of two commonplace objects. Both describe the role of his disciples. The first object is salt, which is only worthwhile if it keeps its flavor. Perhaps this is a caution for the disciple: Never lose touch with essentials. The second object, light, is given more attention. As it would be foolish to hide a candle under a bushel basket, it would be foolish for the disciple to hide his or her light. The disciple must “shine before people,” and thus lead them toward God. These images serve as a transition between the beatitudes and Jesus’ interpretations of some of the commandments. The beatitudes are warm, welcoming, inviting. They create room for everyone, and they invite all into “blessing.” The remainder of the sermon on the mount is demanding, as Jesus insists that the commandments must be obeyed in motive and intent, as well as in behavior. Matthew has set the images of salt and light between beatitudes and commandments to insist that the disciple must aspire to the highest ethical standards while always serving others. As Paul reminds us, this is never a reason for bragging, but a defining principle under which we must live.

**First Aid**

If you’ve ever witnessed an accident or found yourself in a situation where someone needed emergency medical attention, then you know how stressful it can be. As people wait for an ambulance to arrive, other people desperately begin searching for a doctor or nurse or anyone with medical or emergency training. If viewed through this lens of urgency, action, and wisdom, this week’s readings have a similar theme.

As Christians, we are called to act, to serve, and to help the Lord in his work of salvation here on earth. To extend the analogy, if Christ is the divine surgeon in the E.R. of the sanctuary and confessional, we who know him and follow him are like his paramedics. We help bring the sick to the Gospel challenges us. God’s children must be prepared to act and to serve in tangible ways, ways that will save lives (and souls), as we see in Isaiah’s admonition. If we are humble enough to trust in God’s wisdom and power—the first aid training we have received—we will be prepared to share his knowledge and his truth with the souls dying for it, spiritually.

If we see the culture for where it really is—a culture of darkness and increasing hopelessness—there will be a sense of urgency for us to respond. Souls are perishing and the modern Christian must be prepared to become small (in humility) but not act small (with false humility or timidity). God wants us to act and to do so in a way that unleashes his power and brings him all the glory.