

2014

- Well...I hope all of you survived our brief snow and cold okay.
- I remember one early morning in Clayton we had a power outage when it was -10...which makes one a bit anxious. How long will it last? How cold will we get? Are my pipes going to freeze for sure now?
- There I was...groping in the total darkness for a flashlight. “Where did I put those candles?!”...hoping to find a light in the darkness.
-
- Whenever we read or hear Jesus’ parables, we get a better sense of them if we transport ourselves to the time in which He taught.
- On a moonless and cloudy night way out in the country, the darkness can be almost absolute.
- When I was stationed on ship, I used to enjoy going out on the main deck at night and marvel at the utter darkness—something now almost unknown to us. Nowadays there is almost always some light shining somewhere.
- But in Jesus’ time...almost no light in the night at all—only weak candle lamps and maybe some campfires burning.
- Yet...we are creatures of the light, and we long for the security that the light gives.
-
- And this is what Jesus is speaking about.
- With Original Sin darkness entered our world...and sin continues to deepen the darkness.
- Without goodness, without morality—all from God—the world IS dark. Without God...it’s only a dog-eat-dog existence.
- You may have known some people like that. Nothing sacred—not honesty, not integrity, not honor...concerned about nothing except getting what they can get. Looking out for #1! What a sad life. How petty, and destitute of humanity.
- Such a world is hopeless, selfish and despairing. No light at all.
-
- But God reveals himself to the world.
- Before Jesus, God’s revelation to the Jews ushered in a rule of fairness and equality under law.

2014

- That’s what “eye for an eye” was: not retribution, but rather a one-for-one rule of justice, rather than limitless revenge or vendetta for wrong against oneself or family.
- No longer accepted was the “You hurt me, so I kill you” idea.
- And later...when God determined the time was right...Jesus—God Himself—came with the true and complete light: the principles of selfless giving of oneself for others...He giving us the ultimate example by dying for us on the cross.
- For Jesus IS the light...He IS truth...and if we are truly His disciples, we are to mirrors of His light...and are called to reflect the light by doing as he did—seeking the good of our fellow man even before our own.
- By doing so we provide hope to others—showing them that there is no need to despair, but through us the goodness and love of Christ continues.
-
- A candle—no matter how small—overpowers darkness.
- I was at the post office, and someone was at the counter filling out a number of labels; no clerk at the counter. I simply asked if I might go ahead of him in line while he filled out his labels.
- He snapped: “I not IN line!” rather abruptly.
- Oh...the temptation to retort!...but for what purpose? What would that do but spread the darkness?
- So I simply said: “I’m sorry; I misunderstood.”...remembering Ps 15:1: “*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*” (Prov 15:1)
- Will it do any good? Don’t know...but the sarcastic retort certainly would not have. We can at times only hope to plant the seed...to shine a little light.
-
- All of our charitable actions—patience, forgiveness, consideration--no matter how small--provide light to those around us—to give hope, to give a sense of security, to give the knowledge that it is not them against the whole world.

2014

- Jesus spoke to his disciples, saying, *"I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12)
-
- After all...who looks forward to a life without love and goodness? That is why we so desperately long for those things.
- As food without seasoning is tasteless and bland, so are our lives without goodness and charity and love—the salt with which Christians are called to season the world.
- The Christian is to be a channel through which the grace and love and wisdom of God flow...to impart a pleasant flavor to life and to the world.
- As we read in 1 Peter: *"Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing."* (1Peter 3:9)
-
- Walk with Jesus, and learn the art of a soft answer and patience with others.
- Ever notice how about the only people that Jesus got angry or impatient with were religious teachers who led God's people astray?
- You—(names)-- are literally chosen by God from all eternity to be the light...the salt...to the world. Talk with and learn from Jesus by reading the Gospels, and then walk with Him in the world.
- In the Gospels, Jesus sends His disciples forth...not to do something whatever they wanted, but to do what He did.
- We are His hands and His voice in the world; let His actions come through your hands...His voice come from your mouth.
- This is how we become true missionaries and disciples of our Lord.
- For through us and through our actions the seed of God's word is scattered upon the field—to sprout, and to bear fruit.
-
- Now this is National Marriage Weekend, and National Marriage Week goes until the 14th. Now...what's special about the 14th?
- You married couples have the opportunity to be one of the greatest of God's lights in the world—bearing with one another's faults, rearing

little images of God, living in harmony...living in love—the greatest of virtues.

- Cultivate that patience and that caring towards each other which the young will admire and long for.
- And there is no better way to do this than to deepen your relationship with Jesus...who in His life taught us consideration, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, and selfless love.
-
- And all of us remember: Jesus gives us Himself in the Eucharist... food for our journey, the ultimate gift...the salt which flavors our own lives with God's grace, and sustains us in trial.
- Be determined to be the light in your own corner of the world— whether it be as parent or child, as boss or employee, as teacher or as pupil...and in every of relationship and dealing with others.
- In this way the light within us grows ever stronger...the world becomes brighter...and the peace of God reigns within us.
- And then, as Isaiah told us in the first reading: “...*light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday.*”
-
- Jesus tells us: “*If...the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*” (Mat 6:23 RSV)
- Conversely, then, we can discern that...if we shine His light into whatever darkness that is within us, that darkness will flee...and then, how great will be our light.

Is 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.

Ps 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Responsorial Psalm

R. (4a) **The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

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.

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

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

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.

R. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

or:

R. Alleluia.

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.

R. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

or:

R. Alleluia.

[1 Cor 2:1-5](#)

Reading 2

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 a demonstration of Spirit and power,
so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom
but on the power of God.

[Mt 5:13-16](#)

Gospel

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.”

