

2017

- 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.
- 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.
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- With the Incarnation, God reveals Himself bodily to the world. Jesus 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 light...He IS truth...and if we are truly His disciples, we are to mirrors of His light...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...and all of our charitable actions—no matter how small—provide a 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.
- Thus, we come today to our Annual Catholic Appeal, and our in-pew solicitation today.
- Dcn Don and his helpers will now pass out the forms, which you can fill out and return in the collection basket, bring to the office or send in diocese on your own; the envelopes are pre-addressed.
- Please mark down our parish (IHM) when you donate, so that it will be counted to our assigned goal of \$90,000, which is easily reachable...especially if all of us contribute and be generous...and especially reachable in THIS community—one of the wealthiest in the nation.

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- And you can always go online to our website, which has a link to the ACA site...or use the forms you received from the Archdiocese and send it in, which actually saves our office some work
- And if you'd like to give today, you can fill out your forms and put them in the collection basket, or bring them to the office at any time.
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- As you know, the Archdiocese is dependent upon this one annual fundraising to assist it in its evangelizing, educating the young and the adult, aiding the poor and the disenfranchised...and, perhaps most direly needed, educating and training seminarians to be priests.
- ...for we certainly need more priests. Many priests in our archdiocese are past retirement age (70) and continue to work simply out of their devotion to God and to help alleviate the necessity.
- We are blessed to have about 25 seminarians at present, but it costs over \$1 million just to feed, train and house all of them every year.
- Fr. Chris Bernabe was educated with these. Nathan and Tai—our past resident seminarians depended on these. And almost-Father Robert Bustamante from last summer depended upon these—upon US—to support them in their training and education.
- And the ACA does not only aid seminarians, but does so much charitable work—helping the poor, prisoners, refugees, immigrants, and so many in need and in dire circumstances.
- Many of you will have received ACA letters this week as I did, and have given already; thank you for that.
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- We remember St. Paul: “*As for the rich in this world [and who among us is NOT rich compared to St. Paul’s day] charge them... to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous...that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed.*” (1Timothy 6:17-19 RSV)
- Always in scripture—from Genesis to Revelation—God praises those generous to the poor and the oppressed.

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- Jesus tells the devout rich young man wanted to know how to enter the kingdom of Heaven: “*You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.*” (Mar 10:21 RSV)...and in Luke’s Gospel: “*Fear not, little flock...give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail...*” (Luke 12:32-33 RSV)
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- So...be bold in generosity!...not settling for a token gift to check a box, but something really reflecting the blessings God has given you. Once given, you won’t even miss it...and a generous gift of thanksgiving and a generous heart is always loved by God.
- We don’t not settle for the minimum in our daily lives; how much more important to not settle for the mediocre or the minimum in our spiritual lives! Dare to put out into deep water as Peter did... and Christ will be with you.
- Let your light truly shine through giving of self...and Jesus assures us: “*...the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you.*” (Mark 4:24 RSV)
- And God cannot...He WILL not...be outdone in generosity...not in this world, but most certainly in the next.

**Reading 1** 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.

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

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

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.**

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.**

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.**

**Reading 2** 1 Cor 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 a demonstration of Spirit and power,  
so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom  
but on the power of God.

**Gospel** Mt 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.”**