

Gospel Matthew 5:13-16

Your light must shine in the sight of men

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of all, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

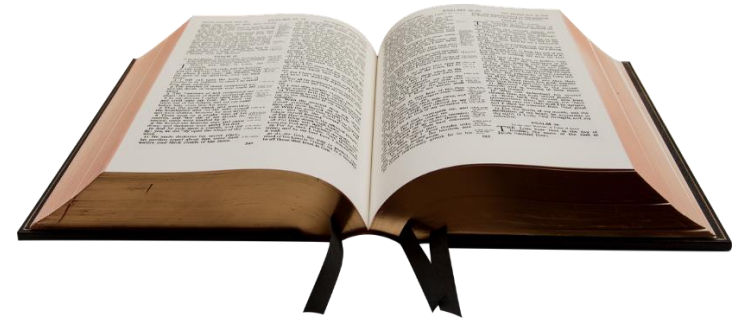
Commentary: *There is nothing worse than feeling useless, especially when there is a crisis. When we observe our world and the problems within it, we might well have that feeling.*

The first reading today provides a solution. Note the reinforcement here of the message: your light shines because of your good works. The tragedy about today's situation regarding the missing generation, is not so much their absence, but rather the constant reminders of the need to share and care for one another. We can judge the truth of this statement by asking ourselves and one another whether or not society is growing in its care for those in need.

LITURGY OF THE WORD,

5TH Sunday in Ordinary Time.

5.2.23.



Dear Parishioners,

This weekend our country has a focus on the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. We might therefore wonder what this would have to do with the theme in the scriptures of today. The answer to that I would think is “everything”.

Quite simply, when the Treaty was signed, it was soon forgotten about. The desire to take over and “possess” became the dominant focus. We ignored what was happening to those who generously signed the agreement. It is good that each year we have Waitangi Day. It is a reminder of the mistakes of the past. It is even better when we make an effort to ponder this day and why we have it.

Ngā mihi,

Fr Alan.

First reading Isaiah 58:7-10 ·

Then will your light shine like the dawn

Thus says the Lord: Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked and do not turn from your own kin.

Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over. Your integrity will go before you and the glory of the Lord behind you. Cry, and the Lord will answer; call, and he will say, 'I am here.'

If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word, if you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed, your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows become like noon.

Commentary: *Given that Christianity is a faith with roots in Judaism, it is easy to see why Jesus, a devout Jew, placed such emphasis on the poor. This reading in my view should be learned by heart by every believer. Note the command and the effect: share your bread ... and your wound (will be) quickly healed. In other words, your sins are forgiven when you are compassionate to those in need. How does it do that you may well ask? You let go of the focus on self and open up to the needs of others.*

When you can share with others, then you become a light to those who struggle. This is how we make the world a better place. It is how we bring into the world the reign of God: your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Second reading 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 ·

The only knowledge I claimed was of the crucified Christ

When I came to you, brothers, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed. During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God.

Commentary: *Here, Paul is writing to non-Jews in the city of Corinth in Greece. What is important here is that he is asking people to believe in a person who was crucified by the Romans. Greeks, known for their philosophy and thinking about life's meaning, might just find this difficult. Paul then didn't enter into arguments but simply stated the facts and allowed the Spirit to do the rest. The message for us: faith is a gift! You can't make others believe what you believe. Live by example and let God do what only God can do.*