

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (February 9th, 2020)

### Isaiah 58:7-10

**Thus says the Lord:** The prophets speak for God. The word “prophet” means “to be a mouthpiece for.” While we think of them foretelling the future, they often tell us how God wishes us to behave in the present.<sup>4</sup>

**7Share 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.** A person should imitate God by doing these things (daily) and then in the company of the poor and lowly he himself will be judged worthy of divine redemption.<sup>1</sup> This is the end of a section on fasting and refers to the nature of true fasting—which is to share what we have with those who have less.<sup>4</sup>

**8Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed;** This refers to the wound of sin. God has attached reparative value to our good acts.<sup>5</sup> 1 Peter 4:8 tells us that the practice of charity covers a multitude of sins...At the time of judgment all wounds will be healed and all promises fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> **your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.**

**9Then 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,** The principle here is that our awareness of God’s illuminating presence in our lives makes us capable of illuminating the lives of others.<sup>4</sup>

**10If 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.** Centuries later Jesus teaches in Mt. 25: 31-46 that he will recognize his chosen ones by what they have done for the poor.<sup>3</sup> In a nutshell, if you want to see light in the darkness, if you want to have your wounds healed and your prayers answered, then feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked and identify with the suffering of your fellow human beings.

### 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5

*Paul had tried the standard approach of appealing to the world on its own terms. We see that in his address in the Areopagus in Athens in Acts 17. We are told that the Athenians were anxious to hear something new from Paul. Instead, in that instance, Paul gave them the same old flattery that they were accustomed to, telling the Athenians that they were just as cultured and religiously sensitive as their reputation held. The whole presentation flopped and resulted in few conversions to the new faith. At the start of this chapter we find him in Corinth.<sup>5</sup>*

**1When I came to you, brothers and sisters, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom.**

**2For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.** By the world’s standards, this was insane! Paul should have fallen absolutely flat with a line like that. Instead, Christianity is the largest religious movement in the history of the world.<sup>6</sup> There are now 2 billion people who follow the Crucified One according to [www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com).

**3I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling,** “Fear and trembling” is a biblical expression for one’s reaction to the power and presence of Almighty God.<sup>6</sup>

4and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, Even the most dynamic proclamations of the gospel remain ineffective unless the Spirit moves the minds and hearts of the listeners to accept it. Paul implies that his own modest speaking ability was a weakness that enabled God's power to work more perfectly through him. The idea running throughout this passage is that God saves the world through what is foolish and weak so that he alone can be praised for the result.<sup>6</sup>

5so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom Here Paul is referring to the philosophical wisdom of men celebrated by the Greeks.<sup>6</sup> but on the power of God. This refers to the inspired conviction with which Paul preached and to the charisms that were manifested in him and in his converts.<sup>7</sup>

### Matthew 5;13-16

*This is a continuation of the Sermon On The Mount that we began last week with the Beatitudes.*

Jesus said to his disciples: This is our Mission Statement

13“You are the salt of the earth. Note that this admonition is universal and not limited to one country or race.<sup>2</sup> Salt was used not only to improve the taste of food but also to preserve meat and fish. When Jesus compares his followers to salt, he is saying that they improve the quality of human existence and preserve it from destruction.<sup>9</sup> 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. Though salt does not actually lose its taste, it may become so ADULTERATED that its taste is weakened to the point where it is no longer of any use.<sup>11</sup> He who fails to realize the ideal of the life of the Gospels will be rejected.<sup>7</sup>

14You are the light of the world. Christians are called to fulfill the vocation of Israel. God adopted OT Israel to be a “light to the nations.” By their obedience to God's Law—itsself a light—the Israelites were called to live exemplary lives that would attract other nations. Jesus now calls us to broadcast the light of the New Covenant by doing “good works” and influencing the world around us.<sup>8</sup> A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. This is an allusion to Jerusalem built atop Mt. Zion in Judea. According to the NT, the New Covenant Church is a spiritual “Mount Zion” and “heavenly Jerusalem.”<sup>8</sup>

15Nor do they light a lamp The word used here for “lamp” actually means “portable lamp” which makes us a lamp in the hand of God, a light that must allow itself to be moved about by Christ as he sees fit. The house is lit up according to the need of the moment: now the kitchen, now the dining room, now the study or the bedroom. The Christian will allow his Lord to choose the particular lampstand where he will shine, and when.<sup>13</sup> and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Good works are the fruit of charity, which consists in loving others as God loves us. St. Therese wrote, “I see now, that true charity consists in bearing with the faults of those about us, never being surprised at their weaknesses, but edified at the least sign of virtue. I see above all that charity must not remain hidden in the bottom of our hearts, for men do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel. It seems to me that this lamp is a symbol of charity and it must shine out not only to cheer those we love best but all in the house.”<sup>10</sup>

16Just so, your light must shine before others, Note that sin dims our light tremendously.<sup>12</sup> that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” Jesus calls God “Father” 17 times in

chapters 5-7. God's Fatherhood is the deepest mystery of his identity; from eternity he fathers a divine Son and throughout history he adopts us as his children.<sup>8</sup>

*Some of the material for this commentary was taken from: (1) "The book Of Isaiah Chapters 40-66" by Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., (2) "Workbook for lectors and gospel readers:1999" by Lawrence E. Mick, (3) "Catechism of the Catholic Church," (4) "Workbook For Lectors And Gospel Readers: 1995" by Aelred Rosser, (5) The Commentary Notes of Tim Gray and Sean Innerst, (6) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The First and second Letters of saint Paul to the Corinthians" by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (7) "The Jerome Biblical Commentary," (8) "Ignatius Catholic study Bible: The gospel of Matthew" by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (9) "The Collegeville Bible Commentary: Matthew" by Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., (10) "The Navarre Bible: St Matthew," (11) Sacra Pagina: "The Gospel of Matthew" by Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., (12) "The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study: Cycle C" by Deacon Ken and Marie Finn, and (13) "Fire Of Mercy, Heart Of The Word" by Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis.*

*In loving memory of Peg Schneller, who compiled these commentaries.*