

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 5 February 2023

Scriptures: Isaiah 58:7-10; 1Corinthians 2:1-5; Matthew 5:13-16

Homily: Fr. Ken

The words of Jesus are very clear in today's Gospel, as they have been for the past two Sundays. A similar message of God is also found in the prophet Isaiah.

In listening to these two passages, we find that when God enlightens our mind and heart, we begin to see things differently. We discover our responsibility for the life and welfare of other people, especially those who are poor and oppressed. Enlightened by the grace of God, we are moved to share our bread with those who are hungry, care for those who are homeless and exploited.

When we do this, we bring light and hope into the darkness of their lives.

In the Gospel, Jesus lets his disciples know that he has not shared the light of his love with them so that they can keep it to themselves. No. He wants his light to shine in them and through them for all the world to see. Jesus knows that the witness of lives that have been changed by love is the light that can transform a darkened world. When we see our world in the light of the love of Jesus, we will be empowered to respond to the needs of people all around us.

When we consider all the various issues that face our world today, we can be overwhelmed and begin to wonder how we can possibly make a difference. The news seems to get worse by the day. The lives of millions of people across the globe have been disrupted by war and by violence.

Refugees flee from their homes in search of a better life; countries to which they flee are closing their borders in a effort to

protect their own way of life and culture. There seems to be no end to the conflict and little hope of a resolution. Closer to home, selfishness and greed seem to dominate our political decision-making and affect even the relationships within our families. Wherever we look, the darkness seems to be closing around us. We need a light to help us navigate through this hopeless prospect. We cannot do it on our own.

But we are disciples of Jesus. From the moment of his death on the cross, when darkness enshrouded the earth, the light of his love, revealed in his resurrection from the dead, has been the beacon shining into our hearts to show us the way to life. He has enlightened us with the Gospel of love. He gives us confidence to persevere in love in spite of all that works against us, whether this is the world around us or the doubts and fears of our own hearts. He has sent us to bring the light of his love to others. It may only be simple acts of kindness and generosity, a word of encouragement or forgiveness and healing. Even these little sparks of love are sufficient to dispel the darkness of people's lives and give them hope. With the light of Christ, we ourselves can see and we will be seen truly helping the world.

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