

A little girl was sitting in church with her mother, waiting for Mass to begin. She was staring at one of the stained-glass windows. Curiosity finally got the best of her as she asked, “who is that person?” Her mother answered, “that is a saint.” Her mother then asked, “do you know what a saint is?” Waiting a moment, the girl answered, “Saints are people that light shines through.”

Let your light shine before human beings.

Jesus never told us we had to specialize in a particular area of study. We weren't told we have to excel in a certain sport. He didn't require a specific academic degree or that we had to live in a particular place. What He did state is this:

You are the salt of the earth.

You are the light of the world.

Pope Francis reminds us that none of us are owners or masters of the Word of God. We are its guardians, heralds and servants. We are not salt or light for our own glory and praise.

So that they may ... give glory to your Father in heaven.

In many ways, what Jesus was asking was not new. In Isaiah we read of the kind of fasting – the way we live our faith – “then your light shall break forth like the dawn; then your light will rise in the darkness.” Yet time and time again God's chosen people failed to hear what was being told to them. Time and time again they became self-centred, unfocused, lost. Isaiah was just one in a long line of prophets called by God to preach to the people, to remind them of what God's people are supposed to be about: loose the bonds of injustice; remove the pointing of the finger; satisfy the needs of the afflicted.

The salt and light we offer to the world; the good news we live; the faith we profess with our lips and our lives; say that the bad guys aren't going to win; every human being is made in the image and the likeness of God; sin will not have the final say; darkness is not going to overwhelm us. Those are the works – that is the message we put forth as we live as salt and light to the whole world.

There are many ways to be that salt and light, but perhaps one of the best is to be authentic. A story and it is shared about a non-Christian, but it can be helpful. A mother came to Gandhi, along with her daughter, explaining to him how troubled she was because her daughter was in the habit of eating far too many sweets than what was good for her. She begged Gandhi for some advice he could give the girl. He thought for awhile and asked them to return in three weeks. So, a little disappointed, they went away and came back in three weeks. At that time, Gandhi pulled her aside and pointed out the harmful effects of indulging in too many sweets and asked her to change her diet. End of conversation. The mother was more than a little annoyed

and asked Gandhi why he just didn't say that when they met the first time. Because, Gandhi said, three weeks ago, I myself was eating too many sweets for my own good.

Or perhaps Mark Twain said it best: few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.

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