

Breaking Open the Word: The Moon's Month

February 05, 2023: 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

WE READ, LISTEN and BREAK OPEN THE WORD:

Today's Readings: **Isaiah 58:7-10, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5** and the Gospel: **Matthew 5:13-16**. While someone reads the Scripture(s), listen well. BE AWARE OF THE IMAGE BEING PAINTED, OR THE STORY BEING TOLD. DOES THE STORY OR THE IMAGE CALL TO MIND ANYTHING SIMILAR IN YOUR OWN LIFE EXPERIENCE? Share your impressions.

Thematically the Readings pick up from where last week left off. Textually, the Corinthians Reading and Gospel literally do pick up where last week brought us forward. Isaiah acts as bit of a cheerleader for those who would be humble enough recognize the strength within our self-quandary! **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.**

- ✓ *Where do you encounter people who are hungry? Hungering for what?*
- ✓ *When have you been "hungry" and perhaps feeling abandoned? What was your hunger?*
- ✓ *How did you move beyond the hunger? How did you satisfy your hunger?*
- ✓ *In what ways do you make it possible for the hungry to be nurtured and sustained?*

Isaiah continues mentoring us, calling us to recognize the healing which is possible in attentiveness to the hunger of people around us.

- ✓ *When have you experienced what Isaiah offers in his comment: THEN YOUR LIGHT SHALL BREAK FORTH LIKE THE DAWN, AND YOUR WOUND SHALL QUICKLY BE HEALED.*
- ✓ *When have you experienced service to the hungry, facilitating housing for refugees or people seeking asylum as "your light breaking forth like the Dawn?" Find a place where you can sit quietly early in the morning as the sun breaks the horizon. There is more than a visual impact.*
- ✓ *How can that impact provide "your wound" to be healed? Dare yourself to try.*

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Last week Paul challenged us through the Corinthians to Consider [y]our own calling.

This week Paul describes how he came as a mentor in the Way of Christ, the Walk of Faith. He accompanied the Corinthians in the wisdom of humility: **I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were...a demonstration of Spirit and power.**

- ✓ *When sharing your Faith with others, how do you present what you believe? Is it through apologetics, a catechism approach (definitive answers to superficial questions) or sharing your experience as Isaiah: "your light breaking forth like the Dawn"?*
- ✓ *Which of these approaches actually penetrates the "soul" with the grace of transformation?*

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Matthew follows through immediately:

- **You are the salt of the earth.**
- **You are the light of the world.**
- **Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.**

We are Metaphors of transformation AKA conversion. Not: "You are answers" but: "Experience."

- ✓ *What is a question with which you have struggled? How did you find your way through it?*
- ✓ *12 Steppers: How did you come to address your powerlessness?*
- ✓ *What strength is there in admitting weakness and allowing others to walk with you?*

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Compare these selections from two of the Roman Liturgy's Eucharistic Prayers to the ideas expressed in today's Readings about the call of the Gospel Way .

Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs: IV

Bring your Church, O Lord,
to perfect faith and charity.
Open our eyes to the needs
of our brothers and sisters.
Inspire in us words and actions
to comfort those who labor and are burdened.
[Help] us serve them truly,
after the example of Christ
and at his command.
May [the] Church stand as a living witness
to truth and freedom,
to peace and justice,
that all people may be raised up to a new hope.