

## Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) - 2026

Do you ever wonder how you might view Christianity (or Catholicism in particular) if you **weren't a believer**, if you were just someone on the **outside looking in**, so to speak?

What would be your impression or feelings about it? What might you think about the faith itself, but more importantly, what might you think about the people who believe that Jesus is their Light and their Salvation? I think about that sometimes.

I'm sure that the main reason I am a Christian is that I was **raised by Christian parents** whose Catholic faith was very important to them.

However, if I were born to non-believers, would I be a disciple of Jesus today? Honestly, I might have to say there's a good chance I wouldn't.

Part of why I say that is because, we, as Christians in general, and Catholics in particular, believe some pretty incredible things: The Virgin Birth, bread and wine changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, the Resurrection, Angels and Saints...

And yet the main reason I believe it would be unlikely I would be a Christian if I were born to non-Christian parents is because of *something* that at times is **hard to see** in the Christian community.

In other words, so very often the actions, thoughts, and attitudes of people who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior are **no different from those who don't believe**.

And for people on the outside looking in, that can be a **big problem**. And for those of us on the “inside”, well . . . that might just be our **wake-up call**.

Look at how Jesus concluded his teaching in today’s Gospel: “**Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.**”

Evidence suggests that what made the early Christian community so attractive to others was not its beliefs but the **way they lived**. In fact, it appears that little or no catechesis took place before a person was baptized.

What was important was that a person wanted to be united with Jesus and desired to be a part of this new “Way of Life”– a community which seemed to love in a deeper way, forgive more willingly, and was generous to all.

And people on the outside apparently saw the early Church as unlike any other religion they had ever experienced, and they wanted to be a part of it.

When someone was initiated into the faith, religious instruction and explanations of beliefs followed baptism.

In other words, it wasn’t primarily what Christians SAID that was appealing; rather, it was the **WAY THEY LIVED**. Their **beliefs** seemed to truly influence the **choices** they made and the **attitudes** by which they lived.

Can we say the same? Are we convinced that the **way we live** as people of faith is appealing to those around us? Or do our lives **look like everyone else**– the same attitudes, the same values, the same choices?

Think of it this way. Say a new neighbor moved in next door to you. If they were to observe you and your family for a single week, what would they learn about you?

If they were to watch what you did, listen to what you said, notice how you spend your time, and with whom you associated, would they get a really good impression that you were a Christian?

This week, ask yourself: do my actions bring light? Do I live in such a way that people know who I am, who I follow, and to whom I belong?

The Eucharist we share this and every Sunday is our public pledge and re-commitment for the next seven days to live lives that are so attractive, so interesting, so holy, that just one person who has never believed in Christ, or who once did and has given up, who “seeing our good deeds” will say: **“I really want what you have. Where can I find it?”**