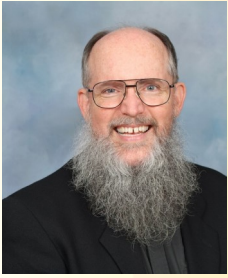


Homily Rerun: February 5, 2017 - Fr. Bill

*Is 58:7-10 / I Cor 2:1-5 / Mt 5:13-16*

### **“You Are the Light of the World”**



Today’s Gospel about the light of the world and the salt of the earth is very familiar to us. It is easy to ‘check it off’ saying to myself, “I know this one.” However, we do not get to ‘check it off’ any Gospel passage because we know it or understand it or even agree with it. We can only ‘check it off’ when we are living it 24 hours a day 7 days a week. I offer three points to help you live this familiar Gospel passage.

#1: If you follow Jesus you are the light of the world.

You do not have a choice in the matter and your opinion is of no consequence: if you are a disciple of Jesus Christ you are the light of the world. It is something you are; not something you do; not something you put on; not something you might be latter. When you decided to follow Jesus you accepted the duty, the responsibility of continuing His life and fulfilling His ministry as the Light of the World.

You can choose to be a good light shining brightly, or a bad light extinguished, burnt out, turned off, or unplugged. But you do not get to choose whether or not you will be the light of the world. The key to doing this well is to stay plugged in to Jesus by a conscious, deliberate choice every day of your life. A prayer of ‘morning offering’ is an excellent aid to doing this. That is why the good nuns and priests instructed us to start each day with a ‘morning offering.’

#2: You are not a mirror or a reflector; you are the light of the world.

Spiritual authors and directors have taught that Jesus is the source of light, i.e. the sun, and we are the reflected light, i.e. the moon. There is much of value to learn from this image but, like all figures of speech it only goes so far in helping to understand the journey of a disciple of Christ. The insight from this image stops right where today’s Gospel begins.

In today’s Gospel Jesus clearly and unequivocally states, “You are the light of the world” – not a mirror or reflector of the light. The application of this is mindboggling. Jesus is the one and only Light of the World. He is requiring such intimate communion with Him that we are His light to and for the world. His light is not to bounce off of me for others to see, but rather He is to be the light shining through, with and in all that I do, all that I am. The fulfillment of this is what St Paul meant when he said, “It is no longer I who live but Christ Who lives in me.”

Hopefully you realize that for you and me this is impossible. So what do we do? After Jesus spoke about the camel and the eye of a needle He said, “For man it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.” In the act of the Incarnation, the Second Person of the Holy & Divine Trinity established an intimate communion with humanity that cannot ever be broken or come to an end. He gives this intimate communion to us in the Eucharist, and it is this incomprehensible, intimate communion with Jesus that makes us the light of the world.

When you receive Holy Communion at Mass it is Jesus that you receive. Just sit there with Jesus allowing His loving presence to possess you in the most holy and most intimate communion. Circumventing this opportunity is why it is so devastatingly sad when anyone whimsically leaves Mass early, bypassing Jesus’ desire for intimate communion with you. The time after you have received Holy Communion at Mass is ‘Mary time,’ [remember Martha and Mary and the work?] time to just sit with Jesus allowing Him to captivate you in the intimate communion which makes you the light of the world.

#3: Each candle is important without exception.

If the church were in total darkness the lighting, or extinguishing, of one candle would make a very noteworthy difference. If I did that in a fully lighted church the amount of added, or subtracted, light would be the same but it would go unnoticed. The only way for the Church to be fully effective as the Light of the World is for each one of us to accept and fulfill our responsibility, obligation, vocation to be the light of Christ to, in, and for the world. And we can only do this by accepting the intimate communion into which Jesus invites us as His disciples.

When all is said and done it is all about being a disciple of Jesus Christ. He calls me, and enables me, and depends on me to be the light of the world.