

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 8:12

Alleluia, alleluia! / I am the light of the world, says the Lord; / the man who follows me / will have the light of life. / Alleluia!

## GOSPEL

Mt 5:13-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

*You are the light of the world.*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.'

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

### ■ The Gospel of the Lord.



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# Reflections on the Gospel

## BE SALT AND LIGHT

To appreciate what Jesus has in mind in the images of 'salt' and 'light' we need to recall the setting of the sermon that continues in the Gospel for today. Jesus is addressing his disciples in the presence of a great crowd of burdened and afflicted people gathered on the plain below (Matt 4:23-25).

In the opening words of the sermon Jesus called 'blessed' people prepared to live in the vulnerable, non-grasping ways listed in the nine beatitudes. Now it becomes clear that they thereby become a blessing not just for themselves but for the burdened mass of humanity as well. As those who really lift other people's burdens, they become and remain the 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world'.

Salt can hardly 'lose its taste'. Nevertheless, if it is contaminated and so (in the days before refrigeration) rendered useless for preservation, it is only good for salting the path outside the house, where it will be trampled underfoot. Disciples who fall away from their vocation may face a similar fate.

Jesus' comments in relation to 'light' fall into two parts. First, in biblical tradition Jerusalem was the archetypal 'city built on a hilltop'. When the Temple was illuminated at night, Jerusalem could well be described as 'the light of the world'.

Secondly—and more mundanely—one does not go to the trouble of lighting a lamp and then hiding it.

So we are to be like lamps kindled by God. Schooled by Jesus, our good works are to give light and hope in a darkened world.

**Brendan Byrne, SJ**



FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

09 FEBRUARY 2020

## FIRST READING

Isa 58:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

*Your light will shine like the dawn.*

Thus says the Lord:

Share your bread with the hungry,  
and shelter the homeless poor;  
clothe the man you see to be naked  
and turn not from your own kin.  
Then your light will shine like the dawn  
and your wound be quickly healed over.

Your integrity will go before you  
and the glory of the Lord behind you.  
Cry, and the Lord will answer;  
call, and he will say, 'I am here.'

If you do away with the yoke,  
the clenched fist, the wicked word,  
if you give your bread to the hungry,  
and relief to the oppressed,  
your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your shadows become like noon.

### ■ The word of the Lord.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 111:4-9. R. v. 4

**R. A light rises in the darkness for the upright. (or Alleluia!)**

1. He is light in the darkness for the upright: / he is generous, merciful and just. / The good man takes pity and lends, / he conducts his affairs with honour. **R.**

2. The just man will never waver: / he will be remembered for ever. / He has no fear of evil news; / with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord. **R.**

3. With a steadfast heart he will not fear; / open-handed, he gives to the poor; / his justice stands firm for ever. / His head will be raised in glory. **R.**



## SECOND READING

1 Cor 2:1-5

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

*I came to you to proclaim Christ crucified.*

When I came to you, brothers, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed. During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God.

### ■ The word of the Lord.