

HOMILY for 5th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year A

This Sunday's Readings talk about being the salt of the earth & the light of the world. Pondering on that message, I'm reminded of this cute story to share with you.

A missionary to Europe was knocking on doors in his adopted country. At one house, an older woman answered – and when she realized the man was a missionary, she angrily demanded that he leaves, slamming the door in his face.

The door, however, bounced back open, and the woman shouted, "Get your foot out of my door!"

"But ma'am..." the missionary began, when the woman slammed the door again. Once again, it bounced back open.

"I said, get your foot out of my door!" the woman yelled again. Once more time, she slammed the door, only to see it bounce back.

"But, ma'am..." the missionary said again, only to be cut off.

"Don't talk back to me, son!" the woman screamed in a rage. "I want you off my property!" She slammed the door a fourth time, only to see it bounce open a fourth time.

"Ma'am!" the missionary yelled, "you'll be able to close your door if you move your cat out of the way!"

It's not always easy to be the salt of the earth & the light of Christ to the world. Anyway, I don't know about you, but I'm quite intrigued by what Jesus said in this Sunday's Gospel. He told His disciples: "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world." What did He mean by that? Why did He compare His disciples to the salt & the light? And how could His disciples be the salt of the earth & the light of the world?

Before trying to answer those questions, let's examine the two elements that Jesus used to compare His disciples to. The first element that Jesus used is the salt of the earth. If you've ever done any cooking, you would realize the importance of salt to make our dishes tasty. Without salt & spices, our cooking would be bland & our dishes would taste like hospital food. In case you don't know, due to medical reasons, hospital food does not use a lot of salt & spices. Good food makes our life more enjoyable & helps us celebrate all kinds of events & causes. Without good food, we would not look forward to a celebration or want to consume any food every day. That would make our life very boring; & we'd be starved of essential nutrition. So, Jesus wants us to know that we are an important part of the world. We Christians help add flavors to this life & give everyone a reason to live. Without our Christian faith, our world would not be the same. Imagine how our world would be like without Jesus & all the wonderful Christian work. That is why we better live up to our Christian mission. Otherwise, we would be useless to the world & its daily life.

The second element that Jesus wanted to borrow from real life to communicate about our Christian mission is the light of the world. Here is what Jesus tells us about our Christian role in this world. He says, "...You are the light of world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp & then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds & glorify your Heavenly Father." Evidently Jesus wants us to be the light of the world & bring it hope. He asks us to set that light on a lampstand & let it shine to the whole world. Unfortunately, we Christians have hidden the light of Christ & not let His Good

News reach everyone around us. We have kept Jesus all to ourselves & not shown Him enough to the world. If we do, we tend to condemn it & turn it away from Jesus. We like to act as a judge & look down on people who might be different from us or have a viewpoint that we don't share. We enjoy glorifying ourselves instead of God. That is why our world is full of darkness & evil things. Today Jesus wants to remind us to brighten our world & show everyone His goodness & our Christian faith.

In case you want to know more about being the light of the world & the salt of the earth, today's First Reading has this advice for us, "Thus says the Lord: share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed & the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, & do not turn your back on your own. Then your light will break forth like the dawn, & your wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before you, & the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard." It continues, "...If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation & malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry & satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, & the gloom shall become for you like midday." So, apparently Jesus wants us to show our care & compassion to the hungry & the homeless. He asks us to reach out to the poor & lend a helping hand to the misfortunate. In addition to that, we need to remove false accusation & malicious speech. We should get rid of all the bad stuffs in our hearts or anything that might show our dark side. Once we do all of that, we'll be able to show the world the light of Christ & bring His healing to ourselves & glory to God.

If you've ever reached out to help someone in need before, you would feel humble & good about yourself for doing that. You're thankful & honored that you could show the light of Christ to the world by that good deed. Don't take me wrong, prayer is important; but it's not enough. St. Paul once said, "Faith without work is like an empty gong." That is the serious danger that I've happening among many Christians. They simply focus a lot on prayers & neglect acts of charity. Because of that, the world cannot see the light of Christ & continues to remain in darkness. It also views our Christian Church to be non-beneficial to its daily life like salt that has gone flat & has had no more flavor. Therefore, we got to listen to our Lord's advice & try to be the light of the world & the salt of the earth. That way we can be the positive influence to our world. In case you don't remember, we Christians call the message of the First Reading the Corporal Work of Mercy. It consists of feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick & the imprisoned, & burying the dead. If we truly live out the Corporal Work of Mercy, we'll show the world what it means to be a Christian & let everyone see the light of Christ.

My dear brothers & sisters, I don't know about you, but I'm honored to be a Christian & follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Our Lord did spend some time in prayer. But, He also went out to feed the hungry, heal the suffering, & give life to the hopeless. So, it's good that we pray daily. But, we got to practice the Corporal Work of Mercy if we want to be salt of the earth & the light of Christ to the world as Jesus has commanded us.