

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time – January 22, 2017 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 8:23-9:3

First the LORD degraded the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the end he has glorified the seaward road, the land west of the Jordan, the District of the Gentiles. Anguish has taken wing, dispelled is darkness: for there is no gloom where but now there was distress.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as people make merry when dividing spoils. For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder, and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian.

Psalm: Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14

R. (1a) The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid?

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

One thing I ask of the LORD;
this I seek:

To dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,

That I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD
and contemplate his temple.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD with courage;
be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose. For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers and sisters, by Chloe's people, that there are rivalries among you. I mean that each of you is saying, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? For Christ did not send

me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning.

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen. From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him. He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.



Readings and excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass* ©1970, 1997, 1998 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., ©1997, 1981, 1968 International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc., and ©1964 National Catholic Welfare Conference, Inc. Excerpts from the *Sacramentary* ©1969–1985 ICEL. Excerpts from *Living Liturgy* ©2001 The Order of St. Benedict, Inc. Clip art ©1994, 1996 The Order of St. Benedict, Inc. All rights reserved.

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time – January 22, 2017 – Good Shepherd Parish

INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Why does a single candle in a window have such great charm for us? Picture it in your mind and then compare it to a room with forceful florescent lights giving every nook and cranny equal light, lots of it, no shades of grey, and the wrinkles and imperfections of a human face wanting to run and hide because all their mess is made very obvious. Whew. Now think of a room lit by candles. Somehow the better parts of each face are brought out. The flaws are left kindly in the background. Such lighting pardons our imperfections and gives us a holy glow. Well, Jesus is that kindly light. Not a powerful searchlight from which no flawed, scrabbling thing can escape but a simple person, a forgiver of souls and a quiet observer of human faces. But wait. Isn't Jesus a brilliant light, a relief from the gloom that we all walk in? *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.* (First Reading) The great light, the Savior, the light of lights, the Messiah. Yes, but the Gospel shows us a man walking simply along the Sea of Galilee like an ordinary person, strolling. In other words, a humble man, a small beam of light, dim like the rest of us. How is he a "great light"?

Not a huge bolt of lightning, but, impossibly, a candle flame, a quiet flicker.

Maybe he is a lively person, one that people are attracted to. Maybe he is a hero that you and I would automatically want to follow. Two sets of brothers do drop everything and follow him—the sons of Zebedee, or "sons of thunder," as Jesus will call them later. They are not fools. They would not just follow anyone. Jesus must have been a very appealing person. Did these brothers see him as a "great light"? Did they believe that grave darkness would be dispelled by him? Common sense has to say no. He was only a quiet glow, the candle in the window. The only thing the brothers knew was that they wanted to be with him. The good thing they could see at this point was that Jesus' light was not florescent, spotlighting every craggy cranny of people's lives. That his armies did not savage all in their path? Not a huge bolt of lightning, but, impossibly, a candle flame, a quiet flicker, one that hurricane winds tried and tried to put out, but could not. Maybe Christ's light was great, yes, but in a new way, one that looked quite ordinary and diffused.

Pope Benedict XVI put it like this: God's sign is simplicity. God's sign is the baby. God's sign is that he makes himself small for us. This is how he reigns. He does not come with power and outward splendor. He comes as a baby—defenseless and in need of our help. He does not want to overwhelm us with his strength. He takes away our fear of his greatness. He asks for our love: so he makes himself a child. Child? Yes. Somehow the greater that greatness becomes, the smaller it seems to our earthly eyes. The true nature of Godness is revealed in the divine/human man named Jesus. Come let us adore.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone." This famous saying from Isaiah is quoted again by Matthew in our Gospel passage (also in the prologue to John's Gospel and elsewhere). Can you see the darkness in the world today? How can you help bring the "light" into dark areas? Can you think of new ways or places to bring the light?
2. Are Paul's remarks about quarreling directed only to the Corinthians in this passage or elsewhere as well, as for instance, to your parish? If Paul fixed the problem in his time with the present message, why do we still have the problem now?
3. As soon as Jesus heard that John was arrested he immediately moved into Herod's territory and began an intense program teaching, healing and preaching repentance. What would cause him to make such a dangerous move? Are you able to stand up and get involved for what is right when you see that you will suffer pain or loss when you do? What do you think of Jesus when he acts like this?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to your good pleasure, that in the name of your beloved Son we may abound in good works. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen