

Fr. Romeo Evangelista's Homily
February 09, 2020
The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

John is a rich businessman, one day he went to his pastor to ask a favor. Father, he said, can you do a funeral for my dog? The pastor replied, I'm sorry John, but I can't, we don't do funerals for pets, but I can do a blessing if you want. No Father, I really want a funeral because this dog is like family to me. I'm so sorry John, we can't do that. Its ok Father, you know I was planning to donate \$200 thousand to our church but maybe I should give it to another. Wait John, the pastor said. Is your dog a Catholic?

St. Paul said, your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on the power of God. "Human Wisdom" tells us that wealth, power and fame are all that matter in life. We must have one or all of these—by hook or by crook—if we do not want to be considered failures. Thus too many people have made them their Gods before whose altar they sacrifice everything – values, morality, principles. So do honesty, fairness, industry, sharing with others, purity, love, etc. – as these do not bring anyone anywhere.

At the start of his ministry, Matthew portrays Jesus as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, namely, that he is "the great light" that will disperse the shadow of death, of sin, that has enveloped the world. Now Jesus is sharing this task to his disciples, you are the salt of the earth and you are the light of the world. Jesus tells his disciples what they are to be and do in the world so that they can help shape it according to God's plan – doing what salt and light do to things.

Salt and light have one thing in common: they are not appreciated in themselves. They become valuable only when used according to their nature: salt to make our food tasty and light to allow us to see our surroundings. As salt and light, we the followers of Christ, have to be in and mix with the world and give meaning to and influence what happens to and in it through our good deeds.

How can we be salt and light to the world? Looking at the readings today, we see that something must be added to these images of salt and light. This is found in Isaiah's prophecy. He says: Feed the hungry, welcome the homeless, clothe the naked, never turn your back on your neighbor – this is how, in fact, we become true light, a dawn that breaks upon the world.

It is not automatic that we are baptized into becoming salt and light. Only when we help others, especially the neediest among us, as Isaiah enumerated, that our light shines and we are clearly revealed as followers of Christ. We must show love and compassion to others, to those who call to us in their need.

We cannot be salt and light by ourselves alone. Our life must be an offering to others. If we are selfish, a miser, our following of Christ is in vain. Jesus is awakening in us today the fact that we are richly blessed in life. But how many of these same blessings flow into other people's lives? Do we really share our blessings with those in need?

As salt and light our lives should always bring inspiration and joy to other people.

Living the true values of our Christian life really makes a difference for others and the best way of becoming a salt and light for the world. And as we become salt and light to others, let us do so for the reason Jesus gives us, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.