

We Respond

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) O Come, let us worship God and bow low before the God who made us, for he is the Lord our God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Psalm 111)

ANTIPHON: A light rises in the darkness for the upright.

RESPONSE: A light rises in the darkness for the upright.

LECTOR: He is a 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.**

LECTOR: 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.**

LECTOR: 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.**

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

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, his wonders for the children of men, for he satisfies the thirsty soul, and the hungry he fills with good things.

Or

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be consoled. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall have their fill.

TODAY'S READINGS Isaiah 58:7-10; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Matthew 5:13-16

NEXT WEEK (6th Sunday, Year A) Sir 15:15-20; Psalm 118; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37

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Sharing Christ's light



5 February 2023 5th Sunday Year A

Following on from the beatitudes in Matthew's gospel, Jesus speaks of his followers as salt and light. Is that us, we might wonder? While we may no longer preserve food with salt, though millions in the world still do, we all know something of the lift it can give to food. We don't want to overdo it, but no salt and our food might lack for something.

So, salt comes into its own when added to something else. That's our task, to add something to people's lives, to give what life we're able to those who share our lives. But Jesus then reminds us that salt can lose its distinctive character and be of no use except for salting the path. So too can we, when the world is too much with us.

If we adopt unwittingly the ways of the world and the call of Jesus fades into the background of our lives, we too will lose our character. To be in the world, to love it, but not be of it, is what's required of us if we are to be 'salt of the earth'. That is what we are to be in our street, in our neighbourhood, in our town and even beyond.

Jesus goes on to say that 'you are the light of the world'. Rather like salt, light doesn't illumine itself, so we're to share the light of Christ, who is the light of the world. That's what we are called to be: a light which will help illumine the lives of those with whom

we share our lives. And as we begin to open our lives to others, we begin to recognise we belong to one another, and that this includes people in need, the hungry, the homeless, those left with nothing (as Isaiah says in the first reading). Then our light will shine 'like the dawn.'

When we do this we'll begin to live the beatitudes and be counted blessed. We'll learn to reveal the power of the Spirit and of God, as Paul says in the second reading. It begins with doing simple things. This light can also illumine the unease and, at moments, even the despair of our lives; and then we might find we're able to sit with people who feel weighed down by their lives. As we begin to do this, let us give thanks to God for enabling it, because we're living as God wants us to live.

So, don't hide our lights away, for what use is that, but put them on a stand, in order that they might shed some light in a darkening world. Let our good works be that light. In this way Jesus encourages us to be salt and light for the world. When we do this, we're able to make a difference, and to witness to this way of living.

Damian Coleridge
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