

Homily (notes) from Canon Philip Dyson

**5th February 2023 - 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Readings (Year A): 1st: Isaiah 58:7-10. Psalm 111 (112):4-9 2nd: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

**Gospel:** Matthew 5:13-16 - Your light must shine in the sight of men

Secularistic society, in which God or religion are not in any way relevant to what happens in life will be enlightened only by beacons of good example. Candlemas Day, marking the end of our Christmastide when we celebrated during those 40 days of the Word that became flesh for us, and as St John in the preface to his gospel says “that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower.”

Today both in the first reading, the Psalm, the gospel acclamation and the words of Jesus himself all speak of light shining. Jesus’ injunction is “let your light shine, so that seeing your good works people may give the praise to your Father in heaven.”

Today’s Psalm lists many of the qualities of life and good works which express the kingdom of light in a world of darkness.

**Generous, merciful, just. Kingdom-people, (Christians)** fired with the Spirit of Christ, are **generous** in attitude. Remember last week’s Beautiful attitudes!

Generosity in contrast to the jungle society where self is always number one and what I have is mine to use in any way I wish. (*No I crossed out*)

**Mercy** is a softness of heart in contrast to the hard heart which stores bitterness and seeks revenge and punishment.

**Justice:** our concern for justice shines out in the midst of corruption, untruthfulness, chicanery, sharp practise and double-dealing.

**Kingdom-people** never waver. They are conscious that God is ever faithful and unchanging in love. So, their promise is fully meant and their commitment is faithful.

Infidelity is a mark of the Godless world. The sands are always shifting so there is no solid foundation to build on. We are told there are no absolute values or truths; everything changes with the conditions, but whatever “they” decree is to be unquestionably obeyed.

The love of God is everlasting and unconditional. We have no fear of evil news, such is the firmness of our belief in God. Without trust in God what is there to keep people from succumbing to the bad news?

Many people today as so disillusioned that they no longer can trust anybody. They are settling for the philosophical view of life that is meaningless and absurd. The sadness of this atmosphere drags far too many people into the pits of anxiety and depression, sometimes where they can no longer find sufficient reason to continue living.

The question used to be; is there life after death? The question for many minds today is: is the life after birth worth living?’ That is where we Christians: Kingdom people are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Not our own doing but by the power of the Holy Spirit within us.

The Spirit inspires:

A steadfast heart that will not fear:

An open-handed nature that gives to the poor

A justice that stands firm for ever.

**Shine!** The light that is promised today, which will come from God if we are showing respect for others, is meant to shine brightly in our world.

Here is the poem by Marianne Williamson quoted at his inauguration as President in South Africa by the great Nelson Mandela:

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.  
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.  
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.  
We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?  
Actually, who are you not to be?  
You are a child of God.  
Your playing small does not serve the world.  
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking  
so that other people won't feel insecure around you.  
We are all meant to shine, as children do.  
We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.  
It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.  
And as we let our own light shine,  
we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.  
As we are liberated from our own fear,  
our presence automatically liberates others.*

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