

Word Sharing Circle (WSC) Reflection Guide

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle A, Year I)

February 5, 2017

Community Word:

Our proclamation of the gospel is an affirmation of God's power and Spirit.

Theme: We affirm God's power and Spirit when the light of Christ in us shines before others.

Promise: *"Light shall rise for you in the darkness."* (Is 58:10b)

Reflection:

Jesus exhorts all His followers to be the salt of the earth. Salt is used for flavoring; to give taste to food. It is also used as a preservative. As followers of Christ, we have tasted His goodness, His great love and mercy. We have received His word and have been given the gift of prayer and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We have accepted Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior. We are now sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. We have been "seasoned" as new creations.

We should "preserve" this new life that Jesus has given us. Therefore we should remain firm in our faith and continue to deepen our relationship with Christ. We should exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit daily in our personal capacity and in community. Daily we should adore and worship God, praising Him from our hearts, praying and singing in tongues; and thanking Him. Daily we should meditate on His Word. As we quiet down our spirits, we should allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of any unrighteousness that remain embedded in our hearts. Then we can truly repent, confess our sins, and cultivate a pure heart where Jesus can dwell. Our ideal is to attain the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22); for as we demonstrate these fruits in our lives, other people will see us as authentic witnesses of Christ. Then they too, may be inclined to be "seasoned" by Christ.

If we are not diligent enough and lose our interest in prayer, in His word and in following our covenant with the Lord; being connected to Jesus like the branches to the vine, we will not be effective witnesses. People will not listen to what we have to say and we lose our effectiveness as witnesses, as Jesus points out in Matthew 5:13: *"But if the salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."*

We read in second letter to the Corinthians, that *"the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they may not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God,"* (2Cor 4:4). What most people hear are the messages of media. They only see the neon lights of this world. Their basic message is "buy me, buy me, so you can be beautiful, handsome, and acceptable like movie actors and actresses." Their message goes on – you can be the best, the number one to be idolized by others. And so people strive to excel, to accumulate things, wealth, and human esteem and adulation. Later in life, they realized that they have climbed the "ladder of success" that leads nowhere. They failed to see the glory of God; they failed to perceive and receive God's goodness, love, and mercy.

As we remain "seasoned" in Christ, we then allow the light of Christ to penetrate our hearts; keeping it pure. But we still have to manifest the light of Christ in our deeds by *"sharing*

our bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when we see them and not turning our backs on our own. We should remove oppression from our midst; false accusation and malicious speech and satisfy the afflicted. Then our light shall break forth and rise for us in the darkness; and the gloom shall become for us like midday, (Isaiah 58: 7-10). Let the admonition of Mother Teresa guide us: *"Keep the light of Christ always burning in your heart, for He alone is the Way to walk. He is the Life to live. He is the Love to love."*

As we persevere in following Jesus by being the salt of the earth and the light of the world; we glorify our Father in heaven. We can then have the Promise of the Week: ***"Light shall rise for you in the darkness"*** (Is 58:10b).

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, grant me the grace to be your true witness to others that Your teachings of love and compassion may be heard in the words that I speak and in the deeds that I do. Give me perseverance in face of challenges that I may encounter as I follow Your direction to be the "salt of the earth and light of the world." In Your Name, I pray. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

1. How can I be an authentic Christian witness for Christ to my family, friends, officemates and community brethren?
2. What prevents me from doing acts of mercy, like sharing food, clothing and shelter to the poor?

This Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:

February 5, 2017 (Sun) - Is 58:7-10/Ps 112:4-9/1Cor 2:1-5/Mt 5:13-16

February 6, 2017 (Mon) - Gn 1st1-19/Ps 104:1,2,5,6,10,12,24,25/Mk 6:53-56

February 7, 2017 (Tue) - Gn 1:20-2:4/Ps 8:4-9/Mk 7:1-13

February 8, 2017 (Wed) - Gn 2:4-9,15-17/Ps 104:1-2,27-30/Mk 7:14-23

February 9, 2017 (Thu) - Gn 2:18-25/Ps 128:1-5/Mk 7:24-30

February 10, 2017 (Fri) - Gn 3:1-8/Ps 132:1,2,5-7/Mk 7:31-37

February 11, 2017 (Sat) - Gn 3:9-24/Ps 90:2-6,12,13/Mk8:1-10

"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"