

February 6, 2011



The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

TODAY

Isaiah 58:7–10
1 Corinthians 2:1–5
Matthew 5:13–16

MONDAY

Mark 6:53–56

"... all who touched [his cloak] were healed."

TUESDAY

Mark 7:1–13

"You abandon the commandments of God..."

WEDNESDAY

Mark 7:14–23

"... there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile..."

THURSDAY

Mark 7:24–30

"... the demon has left your daughter."

FRIDAY*

Mark 7:31–37

"... immediately his ears were opened..."

SATURDAY

Mark 8:1–10

"I have compassion for the crowd..."

*Our Lady of Lourdes

The Disciples of Jesus: A Movement Transforming the World

Today's gospel passage continues Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, his great charter for the Kingdom of God. If we, his disciples today, want to share in his kingdom, we need to listen attentively to understand what it means to live the life of the kingdom.

From that early community of disciples, we have developed as the Church, always keeping at the center our identity as a community of Jesus' disciples. He addresses us as he addressed that early gathering. He envisions his disciples as a community in movement.

In fact, his community is a movement. It is salt that gives savor to this world. It is light that casts out darkness and brings about compassionate healing through "good deeds" for all to see. The end result of this movement is a world transformed, as the prophet Isaiah envisioned it, a place where the

Kingdom of God can truly and fully emerge.

At the center of this community of disciples living, working, and transforming the world from within is the mystery of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, whom Paul proclaims to the Corinthians.

This brief gospel passage coupled with the other readings suggests challenges to our "religious presuppositions." Our sharing in the kingdom of God does not belong to us individually but as the gathered community of disciples. Our sharing in the Kingdom of God does not happen primarily in and through external religious structures but in the dynamism of our compassionate and peace-making works to change the world in the name of Jesus.

Our deep identity is to be the gathered disciples of Jesus, a movement of transformation within the world.



The Faith of the Church

The Church, the community of Christ's disciples who live in today's world, are called to carry on his mission. They bring Christ to all people, and they let his light illuminate the human dilemmas of suffering, poverty, injustice, and sin. The Church is an instrument of transformation as she heralds the coming of God's Kingdom (see the Second Vatican Council's *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*, esp. 5–6).



Questions of the Week

The world and our very lives are often complicated, challenging, and beset by troubles of various kinds. In all of this, people of faith find their hope and direction in Jesus and his proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Adults

When Jesus tells me that I am salt and light in this world, what new thing do I understand about myself and fellow believers?

Children

How can I bring the light of Jesus to my family and my friends?

Visit us at www.FaithFirst.com (click on "Gospel Reflections") and share today's Gospel reading as a family.

Responding to God's Word . . .

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us who we are, what our identity is. We are his disciples who are salt and light in the world. We are the ones who give the world a flavor or direction. We are the ones who bring light into the dark corners of our world.

In the very same moment, as he communicates to us our identity, he also entrusts us with great responsibility on the basis of that identity. Our words, our actions, our way of life, our witness to him—all this fosters the transformation of the world as we know it. With his grace and by his mandate, we help move a

wounded and divided world to become one that is reconciled and at peace. We help move a hungry and deprived world to become one of shared abundance and justice. We help move a world marked by sin to become one that stands in right relationship with God.

The identity and responsibility that Jesus gives us seem so grand, so far beyond us, and so unattainable. And that is true, until we recognize that *he* enables us in the particular circumstances of our lives to see, to decide, and to act, so that we can be true to who we are and what we are called to do.

SUGGESTIONS

Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's Word this week.

In the home. Ask family members to consider and pray over how your home can be a light in this world, a beacon of hope.

In the workplace or in school. Identify one way in the workplace or in school that would contribute to a more reconciled environment and do something to bring it about.

In the community. Identify in your community where the light of hope is most urgently needed. Begin to talk to others about addressing that need.



Meditation Moment

"Nineteen-year-old Nancy Powell was killed in a car crash near Houston. Her tragic death brought an outpouring of emotion from all who knew her. One young man said of her: 'Her purity, freshness, enthusiasm, and most of all her ability to love, bathed all of us who were around her. She was truly a joy. Nancy's essence was that she saw people for what they really were, but loved them as if they were at their best. Her special kind of love will be a motivator throughout my life.' "

ALBERT CYLWICKI

For reflection . . .

To what extent could this same thing be said about me?

LIGHTHOUSES BLOW NO HORNS;
THEY ONLY SHINE.

DWIGHT L. MOODY

FROM *VISION* BY MARK LINK, SJ

Let Me Share Your Light

God of abundant life and mercy, in the beginning, you created light as the first gift of your creation.

You led your people out of the darkness of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. You sent your Son to lead us into your kingdom of wonderful light. Enable us now to share your light in a world afflicted by the darkness of sin and the shadow of death. Give us courage and persistent faith, so that we can generously share your light with all people.

We pray through
Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Carry this thought in your heart as a guide for your faith journey this week.

To be light in the world, we must first walk in the light: . . . if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:7

Profile in Faith

Father Augustus Tolton

Father Augustus Tolton (1854–1897) was the first African-American priest to be ordained in the United States. He served in what is now the Archdiocese of Chicago. He resisted many negative forces to bring light and hope to the people he served. His cause for beatification has been submitted to the Holy See.

NIHIL OBSTAT
Rev. Msgr. Robert M. Coerver, Censor Librorum
IMPRIMATUR
† Most Reverend Kevin J. Farrell, DD, Bishop of Dallas
October 1, 2010

The Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur are official declarations that the material reviewed is free of doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those granting the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur agree with the contents, opinions, or statements expressed.

Author: Louis J. Cameli

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Front photo: iStockphoto

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition*, copyright 1989, 1993, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

© 2011 RCL Publishing LLC. All rights reserved.

The Faith Connection® is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and is published weekly by RCL Benziger, 206 E. Bethany Dr., Allen, TX 75002.

877-275-4725

Contact us at RCLBenziger.com

