

BEING THE LORD'S LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

In the sacristy before Mass today, we were just having a little chitchat – Michael and Kevin and myself, some of the Eucharistic ministers to go to the nursing homes come in, and that's very common. And in the course of the conversation, you get into all kinds of little details and so forth...what's happening in football, you know, and things like that. And then, Mike said, “You know, you go to Long Beach Island. We go to Long Beach Island and I heard that there's a really good restaurant up at Barnegat Light.” And I said, Oh, I didn't know that. I'll have to check that out the next time I go.”

We talk like that. That's human interaction with people. You have something that you come across, and you share that with other people. We don't think about those kinds of things as “I will make you a light to the nations,” but that's what that is: making us a light to the nations means the Lord says, “*I want you to share what you have found with other people. I want you to share it with conviction, whether it's about a restaurant or a football team, or the Lord Jesus – especially if it's about the Lord Jesus.*”

There isn't anybody here who can't do that and who hasn't done that. And the Lord says, “*I want that of you! I want you to realize that you are the light - you are!*” Not that you're going to go out and become famous and a celebrity and everything -no. You're just in your ordinary interaction with people in your home and in your community and in your workplace and in your church. You're going to talk to people. You're going to share yourself with them the things that you have found worthwhile, the things that you have found important...you're going to talk with them about the things you're concerned. You know - whether it's what your family is doing and how different people are doing in their relationships or where people are in terms of their faith. You're going to talk about these things. The Lord wants us to talk about these things. He doesn't want us just to complain about things, but he wants us to understand He wants us to talk about these things. That's how we spread the light. He wants us to be people, men and women, of hope. And he's called us to that.

And that's the theme that runs through all of the readings today. Isaiah: he's talking about the *calling* that people have received and that Israel is called to *return* cause Israel has wandered away. Our country needs to be called back because it's wandered away. Families need to be called back because they've broken up...gone away. And we say, “oh, we can't accomplish that.” The Lord knows that – He doesn't expect us to accomplish that. *He will accomplish. He wants us to be part of it. He wants us to be serious about it. He wants our conviction.* It's how we share what's in our hearts with people that He wants; He wants us to share what's in our hearts with other people. And it won't always be accepted; it won't always be received. But that's what He wants. That's what He asks us to do.

Paul, in his opening to the Corinthians, says, “I'm called to be an apostle. I'm called to tell you the good news. And I have people in my retinue – Sosthenes, other people – they help do it too, and they tell the story and *they shine the light when they go.*”

And John the Baptist is called to be the one who points out: *there's the Lamb of God. He's the one that we've been expecting.* Why is that necessary? Why is that important? Because an awful lot of the world lives in hopelessness and *Jesus comes to give us hope. Something to realize is happening to us. Jesus comes to, to allow us to have access to His grace, which is a transformational reality. It changes things, but if nobody hears it, no one will believe.*

We have to talk and we do talk, but we have to have a mindfulness about that. We don't think of ourselves as present-day disciples. We think of ourselves as Catholics. Well, you know, in the first century, in the church in Antioch, that's when the word "Catholic" was first applied to the believers in Jesus - first century. We've been Catholics all that time. We're disciples. We believe in Him. And He says, "because you believe in Me, I need you to tell the story. I need you to share what's in your heart. And I'm not putting a heavy burden on you. I'm asking you to do what you do normally and naturally. But I ask you to include Me in that process."

Don't be afraid to talk to people about what you believe or what you've heard or your experiences in prayer.

Don't be afraid to believe that. Don't be afraid to share that He invites us...He draws us.

You know, you're *summoned* here on Sunday, but you know what else? *We summon Him*. When I put my hands over the gifts, the Holy Spirit...where does that Holy Spirit live - in you! I call forth the Holy Spirit from you to transform the gifts of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. You might think it's me – and I have a share in the power...it's you and me. *We* have a share in the power. And He comes because we summon him. *And every time for 50 years I've celebrated Eucharist, He always answered the summons. He never did not come – never in any Eucharist, anywhere on the planet. He never did not come.*

He allows us to summon Him. But then He says, *"I'm going to send you out and I want you to tell the story. You have to talk to people about me and the important place I have in your life."*

And don't worry about, "Well I don't know how to say it."

"I'll give you the words, you give Me the opportunity. You give Me your heart, I'll give you the words.:"

It's easy enough to do. The twelve that He called in the beginning were simple men – not of great education, and their spouses, and their families. And they seem to get it. They were not more advantaged than we are. *We can get it.*

The Lord says, *"You are My disciples, I send you on mission."*

May He bless us today and give us his peace.