

Homily. 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.A. 8/9 February 2020.

What's the good of a gift if it's not used and shared? It doesn't matter if it's a wok, wallet, whizzer or watch, a gift card or the latest gizmo, a gift never used, never shared, is a gift wasted, left to go mouldy and then be tossed away.

The new law of Christ we heard in the Beatitudes last Sunday is a gift God shares with us offering us a new vision of joy, freedom and companionship. The nine Beatitudes give us a taste of the happiness of heaven here in this world, blessings we can enjoy today. The catch is that they can only be this blessing and joy if we live them and share them with others. If we don't then, as Jesus says, they'll quickly become like salt without flavour or like a light hidden under a tub; a gift ignored, a hope forgotten, a promise abandoned.

The Prophet Isaiah tells us how to let our light rise like the dawn. He says that we have to share our bread with the hungry and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the naked and welcome our own family home. Using our gifts and sharing them with others heals our wounds and restores our integrity lost through greed, selfishness, ignorance and apathy.

Only the fearful hoard their gifts and blessings unwilling to use them or share them. They sour their blessings until they turn into lemons, leaving their gifts like relics rotting on a shelf. They hide their light away showing that they prefer the darkness, picking at their personal sores and

ruminating over their private complaints in loneliness. Whatever the reasons they do this one thing is certain; it's not letting their light shine out before others, giving thanks to God.

When we are blessed our blessing is always for a reason. Our beatitudes and happiness are meant to be given away. This is like our baptismal candle, lit so we can carry in our lives lighting up others as we go on our way. Only by sharing the light of our hopes and by being a blessing to others can we lead people to give thanks to the loving Father of all good gifts. If we are like this then, when we cry out to the Lord will say, 'I am near. I am here, ready and waiting to heal and restore your integrity'.

These times are not right for hoarding gifts, nor are these the days for putting our blessing candles under a tub, darkening the whole city further. Ours is an age crying out for the light we can be, hungering for the satisfying bread of our friendship and wisdom, and the wine of our faith which brings hope and joy. Let's choose to live and to be a blessing, a beatitude, becoming like light rising in the night time full of thanks to God.