

The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Year A –
World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life –
4/5 February 2017 –
(200 Club Banquet Saturday, 2/4; Announce Catholic
Charities' In-Pew Appeal next weekend – All Masses)
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community
HOMILY

1st Reading:

Isaiah 58:7-10

- *"Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; . . . then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am! **If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted;** then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday."*

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 112 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- ". . . . For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. . . . I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, . . . and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of **Spirit and power**, . . . so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God."

GOSPEL:

MATTHEW 5:13-16

- "You are the salt of the earth. . . . You are the light of the world. . . . Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

i. For any of you who may have friended me on Facebook . . . or, for that matter . . . perhaps just check on my posts now and then . . . you will know that the vast majority of my posts are generally Recipes that I see on Facebook . . . since ALL of that food just looks SOOOOOOOO good . . . of course, every now and then it will be something that Ziggy is doing . . . or perhaps a sunrise or sunset or something along the lines of nature . . . Basically, these are the majority of my posts . . . so, I guess according to social media standards, I am probably pretty boring . . .

On the other hand . . . since I also administer the Parish Facebook page, I work at posting items that are very much Church related . . . faith based . . . since I would think that is what one would expect to see on a Church's Facebook page . . .

Truth be told . . . and I'm certain I am not alone in this . . . I have been amazed . . . astounded . . . saddened . . . and all sorts of other emotions over the past several months . . . over things I have seen posted on Facebook . . . yes, by some family members . . . along with people I know or people I know **KNOW** other people . . . Conversations, I have seen posted . . .

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I have been all of this emotions and more and, since I'm a Father Flanagan type . . . for any old enough to remember just who Father Flanagan was . . . I'm talking about the Father Flanagan who founded Boys' Town in Omaha, Nebraska in 1917 . . . not the "Father Flanagan" played by the late actor Spencer Tracey (and one of the boys played by the late actor, Mickey Rooney) . . . you know . . . the Father Flanagan who was famously known for believing . . . intending to sound sexist . . . "there is no such thing as a bad boy . . ." . . . my "inner" Father Flanagan believing that some of the posts I've seen . . . in particular . . . the conversations . . . have been between very GOOD, GOOD people . . . but somehow . . . something was not bringing out in either side the GOOD that I am convinced is in them . . . is part of them . . .

It reached a "critical mass point" early this past week when I did share a post referencing what Pope Francis had articulated some months ago about immigrants and refugees around the world . . . as well as what two (2) different Archbishops . . . Cardinals . . . in the Church and in our country . . . what they had written about recent events and actions taken . . . again, relative to immigrants and refugees as it relates to our country . . . and the world.

Truth be told . . . I will confess . . . that I struggled with

even sharing these posts as I did not want it to be interpreted in a political way but was simply passing on what, deep down inside, I felt were faith-filled reflections and statements . . . offered by some very spiritual and knowledgeable individuals in the Church . . . as they exercised their role of “pastoring” the people of God but also, offering words for all human persons, regardless of religious beliefs or affiliations . . . reflections and statements firmly rooted not only in the Scriptures but how we see our Lord acting during his earthly life . . .

Then, I saw how some believed that the Church, should in fact, “keep their comments to themselves” and trust that “God will help us” . . .

ii. It was shortly after taking in some of these comments that I also read: “Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own. . . . If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then **light** shall **rise** for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday.”

It was at that time that I also knew and recalled that the

Church has **never** been silent . . . for from it's very beginning and even before . . . through Isaiah . . . and his inspired Word of God that the Church "speaks" tonight . . . even before that . . . through the Word who, "In the beginning was . . . and the Word was with God . . . the Word God spoke . . . **Jesus** . . . the one who became flesh and dwelt among us . . . the very one who is the "head . . . of the Body . . . His Church" . . . yes . . . the Church has **never** been silent nor **can WE ever be** . . . for if we were to become silent . . . then there would never again be any "light breaking forth" . . . never again any "light rising in the darkness of humanity" . . . never again a "salt" of faith that sustains and preserves that which God has created . . . nor a light . . . a godly light that "shines before others" . . . exposing good deeds and moving all to glorify our heavenly Father . . .

Yes . . . the Church . . . at its very origin and beginning has **ALWAYS spoken and must never cease to speak . . . not her own words but always, ALWAYS** words of hope . . . words of promise . . . words of challenge . . . words of justice . . . words of courage that call all to a continual conversion of hearts and minds . . . but most of all, the Church must never cease to speak **THE WORD** of **God** . . .

Speak . . . never to self-promote or put forth an agenda

but always, **ALWAYS**, to change hearts and minds . . . our hearts . . . our minds . . . so that we can have the heart of Christ . . . so that we can think with the mind of Christ . . . so that the most vulnerable among us will be protected and defended . . . as Isaiah wrote and as God spoke **through** the words of Isaiah . . . and as **God's word, JESUS, not only spoke but acted** . . . "our own" is Jew and Gentile . . . our own is rich and poor . . . young and old . . . able and disabled . . . black, white, yellow, brown . . . unborn and born . . . yes, the Church must never stop speaking **THE WORD of GOD** . . . speaking a word that **WILL** challenge . . . speaking a word that **MUST** challenge . . . God **IS** helping us to do just that!

iii. Let us not hide the light that is Christ . . . the light that believers in Jesus Christ have been given . . . let us not hide that light under the bushel basket of anger and hatred and fear . . . but let us, with God's help, **REMOVE** those bushel baskets and others . . . so that the one light that matters . . . the one **WORD** that must always be spoken . . . will not only shine before others . . . and heard by our hearts and the hearts of others . . . but again, be that light that rises amid the darkness of humanity . . . illuminating for us and for all the way back to God, through Christ and by the power of the Spirit . . . and that **WORD** that has the power to transform and change lives!