

**5<sup>th</sup> Sun A,  
Lite of World**

**Introduction**

In John's Gospel 8:12 Jesus says that He is the 'light of the world' who brings 'light' into 'darkness'.

John 1:5 tells us that

*... the light shines on in the darkness, a darkness that did not overcome it.*

Jesus is the light.

In today's Gospel Jesus tells us that now 'we are the light.'

What might that mean?

**I Darkness**

First, I believe we must look at the 'darkness'. Where is the darkness in our world?

Just read your News for today... wars, hunger, violence, crime... almost too much 'darkness'.

Then we might look at the 'darkness' in our own hearts.

What do we worry about?

What are we fearful of?

- Health?
- Finances?
- Jobs?
- Kids or grandkids?
- Past mistakes or regrets?
- Forgiveness?
- Anger and resentments?
- Jealousy?

This list could probably go on and on.

Many times Facebook postings can't reveal our hearts, our burdens, or our brokenness.

I would suggest that there is certainly enough 'darkness' to go around.

**II Light**

But Jesus said that we are the 'light' of the world.

Let me tell a story...

*Lorna is a 64 year old black woman in Boston. She's overweight and unattractive, even after a recent nose job. Lorna is on regular dialysis, but that doesn't impede her active social life or babysitting her grandchildren. A*

*retired school assistant, she is close to her 67 year old husband and is much respected in her church for directing the music committee and the blood drive. Lorna tithes (gives 10 % of her income to charity or the church) and in the last few days has organized a church drive to raise \$10,000 for earthquake relief in Haiti.*

I would suggest that Lorna is a 'light' in her world.

With the help of God she chooses to rise above the 'darkness'.

### **A Story...**

#### **The Wise Man and The Bandit**

*Once upon a time there was a very wise man who was on his way to a village on the other side of the mountain to teach, to beg, and to call more disciples to follow his way. He intended to take a shortcut over the mountain pass to save time. But immediately the people and his friends said, "No, don't go that way. The pass is filled with bandits lying in wait for you and if they find you don't have money or jewels they will kill you brutally.*

*The wise man couldn't be bothered with such warnings, and he continued on his way. Well, no sooner had he climbed high into the pass when a notorious bandit appeared, bearing down on him with sword in hand and shouting, "Your money or your life!"*

*The wise man looked up at the man astride his horse, pulled out his empty pockets and said, "I guess it's my life, since I have no money."*

*As the bandit moved toward him, sword in motion, the wise man stopped him in his tracks: "You know the rules. If you take my life, then you must at least grant me a last wish!"*

*The bandit stopped. "Alright. What do you want? Make it quick old man."*

*The wise man said, "My wish is simple and has two parts. First, see that great tree over there and the limb that extends far out over the path? Cut it off!" The bandit grinned and in seconds the limb lay on the ground. "Alright old man, what is the second part?"*

*The wise man turned toward him and said very quietly and steadily, "Now put it back on again."*

*The bandit was speechless and then started laughing uproariously. "You are the stupidest man I've ever met! No one can put a limb back on a tree after it's been cut off! Insane! You're idiotic."*

*The wise man looked at him and said, "I am not the one who is stupid. You are. Anyone can destroy. Any child without knowledge can cut things up. Anyone can main, kill, mutilate and undo reality. It takes no power or intelligence whatsoever."*

*The bandit was caught off guard. The wise man continued, "What takes power, real power, is to be able to heal, to bring life, to restore, to stand in*

*the breach, to undo the evil and the destruction that you've done in the past. That takes real power, imagination, and creativity. What you've done takes nothing at all. Anyone can do what you've done.*

*They eyed each other for a long time. Then the bandit got off of his horse, laid down his sword at the wise man's feet, knelt in respect before him, and humbly asked, "Teach me that kind of power."*

Jesus would teach us 'that kind of power'.

Jesus reminds us that we are not alone in the 'darkness'.

- Sometimes we forget to count our blessings... our friends, our family, our job.
- Sometimes we fail to consider other blessings: the gifts of our talents, our education, our life's experiences, our wisdom learned the hard way.
- Sometimes we don't remember that these are God's many gifts to us.
- Sometimes we get caught up in our troubles.
- Sometimes we get a little too self-centered, as if life is about us and our happiness and our fulfillment... a message constantly given to us by advertisements.
- Sometimes we get the 'poor me's'.
- Sometimes we don't realize that life is not about what we take from the table but what we bring to the table.

A final story...

The Grateful Young Woman

*I read this story awhile ago and it touched my heart, and I want to share it with you today.*

*Awhile back a young, beautiful, healthy college student, suddenly and without warning, lost control of her body and was paralyzed from the neck down. Her friends sent prayer requests to everyone they knew. A few months later, the girl recovered.*

*When she returned to school, her friends noticed that her smile was brighter than before; it was almost as if she had seen Heaven. There was a visible change of attitude; she was kinder, happier, and paid attention to people more than ever.*

*She started sending emails to her friends and family expressing her love and gratitude for all they have done for her. She sent emails to her parents, thanking them for all the sacrifices they made for her since she was born. Although everyone loved the change in her, they had to ask her what caused this change in her. She explained that when she had been immobile in the*

*hospital and thought she would never walk again or would maybe even die, that the most painful thing was the regret she was feeling that she had not lived her life fully. Now that it seemed to be too late, it all seemed so clear that she had not loved enough, used all opportunities to serve. She suddenly knew that all the grudges she held, and all the time lost thinking about those who had wronged her and how to avoid those she didn't like, had been a waste of her precious life. She thought about how much time she spent being mad and miserable for all that went wrong, and how little time she spent rejoicing for what went right! In her remorse, she begged God in prayer to give her a chance to live again so that she could make things right, and God heard her prayers.*

Here is a young woman who learned an inestimable lesson from her experience... don't live in the 'darkness'. Choose to live in the 'light'.

All of us have 'darkness' in our lives. But we also have 'light'.

*She thought about how much time she spent being mad and miserable for all that went wrong, and how little time she spent rejoicing for what went right!*

Jesus says that we are to bring 'light' into our world.

**Conclusion:**

We are here at this Mass. God's Word reminds us of who we are: disciples of Jesus, the Light of the World.

We will soon remember Christ's love for us poured out on the Cross to bring us God's forgiveness, love and strength.

We are so precious to God... each one of us.

At communion Jesus wants to enter our hearts to bring his forgiveness, his encouragement and his strength, so that we can live as his disciples and bring Light into our world.

How can you bring light into your world? Begin with your own hearts.