

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IS TO PREACH THE SALVATION WHICH IS IN JESUS CHRIST

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Homily of Monday, 25th Week of the Year, September 19, 2011
Esdras 1:1-6, Ps. 125, Luke 8:16-18

“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, that those who enter may see the light” (Luke 8:16).

This is what we should do with the light of Christ, which has been given to us. Christ has illuminated us, for he himself is the light of the world (John 8:12). If we believe in him and follow him, we will walk in this light. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). If we walk in his light, illuminated by it, then we should use this light to illuminate others too. We should put the light of Christ “on a stand, that those who enter may see the light” (Luke 8:16). We should not cover it up under a basket, or put it under a bed. We have been given this light to spread it, to make it shine on others.

Because we have the light of Christ in us, we should illuminate others with it, and be ourselves, in Christ, the light of the world. “You are the light of the world ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:14, 16). This is our mission in the world as Christians—to be holy and shine in a world lost in the darkness of ignorance, sin, and guilt. Therefore “be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15).

During his earthly life, Jesus could not openly preach his full doctrine, because the people would not have understood it, since the main events of his life had not yet occurred, namely, his vicarious death on the cross, his resurrection, and the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. After Pentecost, though, his disciples were to preach from the housetops what they had heard whispered in their ear in private rooms. “What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops” (Matt. 10:27). We are to do this, if it is possible to do, without fear of those who can kill us. We should only fear God who can destroy our soul in hell. We are to obey God and proclaim the truth of Christ to all we can reach. “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28).

If we fulfill our mission, preaching Christ before men and illuminating them with the light of the gospel of their salvation in Christ, then Christ will also acknowledge us before his Father in heaven. We should, therefore, not fear to preach Christ to those who still do not know him. "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33).

Christ died on the cross to save us from our sins, having paid for us our debt of suffering for having sinned, thus freeing us from sin and guilt, and he gave us from the Father the gift of the Holy Spirit to rejoice our heart and illuminate us from within. It is the mission of the Church to proclaim that this salvation is available to all who believe in Christ.