



From the Office of the President

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REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

**Homily for the Fifth in Ordinary Time
Fifth Sunday of the Year (A)
SJFR Chapel 10th Anniversary
St. John Francis Regis Chapel
February 5th, 2017
11:00 a.m. Mass**

**Isaiah 58:7-10
1 Corinthians 2: 1-5
Matthew 5:13-16**

With his announcement of the Kingdom, Jesus, like Isaiah, makes clear that he is calling his followers to have an impact on their world. After the Beatitudes and just before his teachings on radical trust, on the love of money, and on deep and repeated forgiveness, he challenges his listeners to live out their discipleship precisely in the context of their culture and the real world.

"You are the salt of the earth....You are the light of the world ..." Jesus names those who follow him. He does not say, "You WILL be salt... You WILL be light." Rather, the disciples, then and now, ARE salt and light, savor and guidance.

Isaiah illustrates what salt and light are. The people are commanded (not asked) to share their bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and homeless, and clothe the naked. We disciples are to welcome the alien, the migrant, the homeless, not in an unthoughtful or naïve way but with genuineness and intelligence and love. Deeds, not merely words. Isaiah wanted his nation to shine like a light, breaking forth like the dawn. These are the good works of the Kingdom of God. They always have been. They always will be.

But we are afraid. Some say our borders are a broken sieve. There is just enough truth in an inept immigration policy to cause fear, fear exacerbated by real-world terror. But that is piecemeal and paltry truth compared to the Gospel. Some say we need to put America first. Some say we need to make America great again. Others, like Pope Francis and leaders of this world-wide Catholic community ask, "What does it mean to be great?" Is greatness found in self-centeredness? In a nuclear option? In an aggressive arrogance that says it is



better to go alone than to build community? Is greatness living in fear and defensiveness? What are the political consequences? Won't we be seen as weak? Patsies? Isn't it better to hide our light and wait for a more opportune time?

Jesus never said when we would encounter the right time to be salt and light. That's because now is always the right time.

What you and I have right now is enough. It is like the Eucharist: You and I receive a little piece of simple bread and a sip of very mediocre wine. Is that the banquet? Is that all there is? For those who perceive and understand, it is the harbinger of the heavenly banquet, full sustenance, food for the journey; it is enough for now and more is coming. For those who do not perceive and do not understand, all the riches in the world will not suffice, will not satisfy.

In being sent out to heal and prepare and share what gifts we have, we prepare for the One who will bring the Kingdom, Jesus. We carry Jesus in our salt and light. Our faith is not announced primarily, as Paul says, with eloquence and high-sounding words or worldly wisdom. The wisdom we announce by living the graces given during these days is the Crucified Christ who lives. We preach with our lives of service. Love is shown in deeds more than words. Thus we are salt. Thus we are light.