

**THIRD SUNDAY - A - JANUARY 26,2014**

**"THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT;  
UPON THOSE WHO DWELT IN THE LAND OF GLOOM A LIGHT HAS SHONE"**

**STORY OF THE TWO SONS**

**A KING HAD TWO SONS. AS HE GREW OLDER HE WANTED TO PASS ON  
THE KINGDOM TO ONE OF THESE TWO SONS AND MAKE HIM THE HEIR.  
HE ASSEMBLED ALL THE WISE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE LAND, AND  
CALLED HIS TWO SONS TO PRESENT THEMSELVES. HE GAVE EACH OF  
THEM FIVE PIECES OF SILVER AND TOLD THEM: 'BY EVENING I WANT  
YOU TO HAVE FILLED UP THIS WHOLE HALL. WHAT YOU FILL IT UP WITH  
IS UP TO YOU. YOU CAN USE THE SILVER LPIECES IF YOU HAVE TO'.**

**AND EVERYONE AGREED, "THIS IS A GOOD TASK"**

**THE OLDER SON WENT OFF, AND CAME TO A FIELD WHERE THE FARM  
LABOURERS WERE HAREVESTING SUGAR BEET AND PUTTING IT  
THROUGH A PRESS. THE REMAINDER, AFTER PRESSING, WAS  
DISCARDED. SO, THE OLDER SON MADE AN ARRANGEMENT WITH THE  
FOREMAN OF THE LABOURERS TO TAKE ALL THE DISCARDED SUGAR  
BEET AND FILL UP THE HALL WITH IT. WHEN THE TASK WAS COMPLETE,  
HE GAVE THE FOREMAN THE FIVE PIECES OF SILVER, AND TOLD HIS  
FATHER THAT THE TASK WAS DONE. THERE WOULD BE NO NEED FOR  
HIS YOUNGER BROTHER TO TRY. HE HAD FILLED THE HALL. BUT HIS  
FATHER REPLIED, "THERE IS STILL TIME. WE WILL WAIT"**

**THE YOUNGER SON CAME BACK, AND ASKED FOR THE SUGAR BEET  
REMAINS TO BE MOVED OUT OF THE HALL AGAIN. HE HAD NOTHING IN**

*HIS HANDS BUT A CANDLE. WHEN THE HALL WAS COMPLETELY EMPTY ONCE MORE, HE CARRIED THIS CANDLE INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE HALL AND LIT IT. IMMEDIATELY, THE WHOLE HALL WAS FILLED WITH LIGHT. LIGHT STREAMED INTO EVERY REMOTE CORNER.*

*AND THE KING SAID TO HIS YOUNGER SON, "YOU SHALL BE MY HEIR. YOUR BROTHER HAS SPENT FIVE PIECES OF SILVER TO FILL UP THE HALL WITH USELESS RUBBISH. YOU HAVEN'T USED EVEN A SINGLE PIECE OF SILVER, YET YOU HAVE FILLED THE HALL WITH LIGHT. YOU HAVE FILLED IT WITH THE VERY THING THAT MY PEOPLE NEED ABOVE ALL ELSE.."*

*SO TRUE, WE NEED LIGHT (AND WARMTH) ABOVE ALL ELSE IN THE MIDST OF WINTER...*

*THAT IS OUR MESSAGE IN THE READINGS TODAY...*

*THAT WAS THE MESSAGE OF ISAIAH FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL OVER 2500 YEARS AGO AND MATTHEW IN OUR GOSPEL WRITTEN OVER 2100 YEARS AGO IS TELLING US THAT IS THE SAME MESSAGE OF JESUS - PROVIDING LIGHT FOR PEOPLE WALKING IN DARKNESS...*

*I THANK YOU FOR REMEMBERING THE ANNIVERSARY OF MY ORDINATION LAST WEEK....*

*I WAS ORDAINED ON SATURDAY, JAN. 22, 1972 AND CELEBRATED MY FIRST MASS ON SUNDAY, JAN. 23 AT OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH....*

*THE READINGS FOR TODAY ARE THE EXACT SAME READINGS FOR THAT DAY....*

*AND THE FOCUS FOR ME WAS THIS PASSAGE FROM ISAIAH AND  
MATTHEW ....*

*"THE PEOPLE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT"*

*I WAS LOOKING FOR THAT HOMILY BUT COULDN'T FIND IT....*

*I'M CONFIDENT I HAVE IT SOMEWHERE...*

*I REMEMBER FOCUSING ON THE IMAGE OF LIGHT....*

*BUT ALSO LOVE.....*

*HOW LOVE BRINGS LIGHT INTO OUR WORLD.....*

*EXPRESSINGS GRATITUDE FOR THOSE WHO LOVED AND SUPPORTED  
ME...*

*AND MY ORDINATION WAS MY WAY OF EXPRESSING LOVE IN MY LIFE*

*AND HOPEFULLY BEING A SOURCE OF LIGHT TO OTHERS....*

*ONE THING I CERTAINLY DIDN'T KNOW AT THAT TIME WAS ANYTHING  
ABOUT THE BEGINNING OF THE PASSAGE....*

*LAND OF ZEBULAN AND THE LAND OF NAPTHALI, THE WAY TO THE SEA,  
BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES....*

*THAT IS A REFERENCE TO THAT AREA RIGHT ABOVE THE SEA OF*

*GALILEE - WHERE JESUS CAME FROM AND WHERE HE SPENT MOST OF  
HIS ADULT LIFE....NAZARETH AND CAPERNAUM....*

*EVIDENTLY THAT WAS THE AREA MORE THAN 500 YEARS BEFORE CHRIST*

*WHERE TWO OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL LIVED - THE TRIBES OF  
ZEBULUN AND NAPTHALI - THE REGION NORTH OF THE SEA OF GALILEE*

*TOWARDS PRESENT DAY LEBANON, GOLAN HEIGHTS, SYRIA, ETC AND*

*THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER JORDAN EVEN ACROSS THE JORDAN - IN  
PRESENT DAY JORDAN...*

*SO MATTHEW IS SETTING UP FOR US THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE  
BEGINNING OF JESUS' PUBLIC LIFE...*

*JESUS BEGAN ONLY AFTER JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS ARRESTED....*

*AND IN THE TERRITORY WHERE ISAIAH PROPHESED...*

*AND ISAIAH PROPHESED THE RESTORATION OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL  
WHO WERE BEING OPPRESSED IN THAT AREA AND HE EVEN MAKES  
REFERENCE TO A BROADER PROPHETIC HOPE -*

*BRING LIGHT ALSO TO THE GENTILES - NOT ONLY THE TRIBES OF  
ISRAEL.....*

*SO MATTHEW IS PUTTING JESUS IN THAT CONTEXT...*

*CONTINUING THE MESSAGE OF ISAIAH*

*BRINGING LIGHT TO THE GENTILES AS WELL AS ISRAEL AS ISAIAH HAD  
PROPHESED....*

*LIGHT TO AN OPPRESSED AND DISSPIRITED PEOPLE....*

*A NEW KINGDOM OF LIGHT AND HEALING AND HOPE...*

*THAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S LIFE.....*

*OF COURSE, THAT IS GOOD NEWS FOR US....*

*WHATEVER FORM OF DARKNESS WE ENCOUNTER....*

*E.G. FINANCIAL WORRIES, STRUGGLES WITH AN ADDICTION, A SERIOUS  
ILLNESS, FEAR FOR OUR SAFETY IN THE MIDST OF VIOLENCE, THE  
HOPELESSNESS INVOLVED IN GIVING UP AN IMPORTANT*

***RELATIONSHIP...PERHAPS EVEN SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)***

***WHATEVER THE DARKNESS....***

***CHRIST JESUS CAN BE A SOURCE OF LIGHT AND HOPE....***

***AND ALSO, AS OUR POPE, FRANCIS SAID RECENTLY - "MAY THE LIGHT WE***

***BRING TO OTHERS NOT BE THE RESULT OF COSMETICS OR SPECIAL***

***EFFECTS, BUT RATHER OF OUR BEING LOVING AND MERCIFUL***

***NEIGHBORS TO THOSE WOUNDED AND LEFT ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD"***

***LET US APPROACH THE ALTAR THIS MORNING WITH FAITH IN CHRIST'S***

***LIGHT, IN HIS MESSAGE OF HOPE AND HEALING FOR US....***

***AND LET US PRAY THAT WE MAY ALSO BE A SOURCE OF LIGHT FOR***

***OTHERS WHO ARE IN THE DARKNESS, "WOUNDED AND LEFT ON THE***

***SIDE OF THE ROAD" ....***