



# Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time (A)  
February 5, 2023

## You Are Really Something!

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

The description of the disciples found in today’s Gospel is an impressive compliment—and an even greater challenge. Jesus tells them they are “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13), bringing out the good taste of living. In other words, life would be bland and uninteresting without them. They are also the “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14), helping people find their way. Without them, others would stumble and fall. Jesus is telling them how important they are in the lives of others. They could each and all say: I am really something!

Such compliments are also a challenge. What must one do to be salt and light in the lives of others? The Isaian passage provides some suggestions: Share your bread with the hungry; shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked; don’t turn your back on your own; remove from your midst oppression, false accusation, and malicious speech. In other words, to be salt or light is to meet the needs of the needy. This teaching of Jesus is not as easy to do as it is to talk about.

Jesus is speaking to his disciples, his followers. They are not those who are simply curious about this itinerant preacher or remarkable healer. They have chosen to follow him, not merely from place to place, but to model their lives after his. Isn’t that what we also claim to be—his followers? Haven’t we promised to model our lives after his? If so, as both compliment and challenge he says to us as well, “You are really something!” †

### A Word from Pope Francis

I would like to ask you now, how do you want to live? As a lamp that is burning or one that is not? ...As burning lamps! It is truly God who gives us this light and we must give it to others. Shining lamps! This is the Christian vocation.

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## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 58:7–10

[I]f you lavish your food on the hungry / and satisfy the afflicted; / Then your light shall rise in the darkness....

### 1 Corinthians 2:1–5

I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

### Matthew 5:13 –16

[Jesus said,] “Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”

**Isn’t that what we also claim to be—his followers? Haven’t we promised to model our lives after Jesus?**

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How is being salt or light a challenge for me?
- In what ways do I already enrich or enlighten the lives of others?



# Justice, Mercy, and the Nature of God

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

## Part I

Anyone who claims to understand God is deceived because we know that God is ineffable. That means that we can know God but never adequately capture God in a concept. God is unimaginable. If God could be understood, then God would be as limited as we are.

God may be ineffable, but God's nature is known. Divine revelation, as seen through nature, as seen through other religions, and especially as seen through Jesus, spells out what's inside God's inexpressible reality.

What's revealed there is both comforting beyond all comfort and challenging beyond all challenge. What's revealed in the beauty of creation, in the compassion that is the hallmark of all true religion—and in Jesus' revelation of his Father—takes us beyond a blind date into a trustworthy relationship. Nature,

religion, and Jesus conspire together to reveal an Ultimate Reality, a Ground of Being, a Creator and Sustainer of the universe, a God who is wise, intelligent, prodigal, compassionate, loving, forgiving, patient, good, trustworthy, and beautiful beyond imagination.

God cannot be deciphered, circumscribed, or captured in human thought; but, from what can be deciphered, we're in good, safe hands. We can sleep well at night. God has our back in the end—both for humanity as a whole and for our own individual lives. As Julian of Norwich prayed: "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." God is good.

## Part II

The Gospels, as we know, reveal a God who is prodigal beyond all our standards and beyond our imagination. The God of the Gospels is the Sower who, because he has unlimited seeds, scatters those seeds everywhere without discrimination: on the road, in the ditches, in the thornbushes, in bad soil, and in good soil.

Moreover, that prodigal Sower is

also the God of creation, that is, the God who has created and continues to create hundreds of billions of galaxies and billions of human beings. And this prodigal God gives us this perennial invitation: come to the waters, come without money, come without merit because God's gift is as plentiful, available, and as free as the air we breathe.

The Gospel of Luke recounts an incident where Peter, just after he had spent an entire night fishing and had caught nothing, is told to cast out his net one more time and, this time, Peter's net catches so many fish that the weight of the catch threatens to sink two boats. Peter reacts by falling to his knees and confessing his sinfulness. But as the text makes clear, that's not the proper reaction in the face of overabundance. Peter is wrongly fearful, in effect, wanting that overabundance to go away. Rather, Jesus wants him—in the face of too much—to go into the world and share with others that unimaginable grace. †

*(Continued next week)*

# PRAYER

*Gracious God, Jesus calls us to be salt and light for the world. In his name we ask for your grace that we may be signs of your goodness to all we meet. Amen.*

The Redemptorists

This reflection is an excerpt from *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Lent and Easter* by Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, available now from Liguori Publications. Visit [Liguori.org](http://Liguori.org) to learn more and review our complete list of *Daybreaks* authors, including Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR; Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA; Fr. Daniel Horan, OFM, and others.

## WEEKDAY READINGS

February 6–11

**Monday, St. Paul Miki and Companions:**  
Gn 1:1–19 / Mk 6:53–56


**Tuesday, Weekday:**  
Gn 1:20—2:4a / Mk 7:1–13

**Wednesday, Weekday:**  
Gn 2:4b–9, 15–17 / Mk 7:14–23

**Thursday, Weekday:**  
Gn 2:18–25 / Mk 7:24–30

**Friday, St. Scholastica:**  
Gn 3:1–8 / Mk 7:31–37

**Saturday, Weekday:**  
Gn 3:9–24 / Mk 8:1–10

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