

**5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Youth Spectacular – February 4, 2017**

We have all been given an amazing calling. As we heard proclaimed in the Gospel, the Church is called to be “the light of the world” (Mt). We are to be “a city set on a mountain” a “light [that] must shine before others.” This is an amazing call from our God, but how well do we live it?

Just because we are the light of the world, that doesn’t mean we cannot hide our light from others; and just because we are the salt of the earth, that doesn’t mean we cannot lose our flavor. We only shine the light of Christ to the world if in fact we do God’s will. The prophet Isaiah reminds us of what this truly means when he speaks the words of the Lord: “Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn.” Throughout Holy Scripture and the Tradition of the Church this message is clear. To do God’s will is to care for the poor and rejected. Pope Francis echoed this truth in his exhortation *Joy of the Gospel*. The Holy Father writes: “Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid... If we, who are God’s means of hearing the poor, turn deaf ears to this plea, we oppose the Father’s will and his plan” (187).

It is very clear, then, isn't it? If we are to be light to the world, salt of the earth, our hearts must be ready to reach out to those in need. Who is in need around you, my sisters and brothers? There are young people in your lives, at school, at church, among your friends, who need to see the light of God in you. They are afraid, or they are alone, or they are ashamed, or they feel rejected. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see them, to help you love them. The Holy Spirit is in you! You do not have to wait to be an adult to be the salt of the earth, you can share God's love right now and witness to Christ where you are. Help the world to see Jesus in the way you shine right now.

So many people are afraid and angry in the world today. Do you feel it? It is so sad, but we can do something about it. Go out from this place and love the people in need. Love the people who are angry, scared, frustrated, isolated, unpopular, unnoticed. You are children of God! Let your light shine in the world. The Holy Spirit is in you all, and he is sending you out into the world to share his presence with everyone you meet. We are so blessed in the Church to have such amazing young disciples alive in the Spirit. We love you, we believe in you, and we are counting on you. Don't hide your light under a basket; don't lose the flavor of God's love. "Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

May Mary our Mother teach you to live your lives, as she did, alive in the Holy Spirit, who is sending you out to shine with his great love.