

FAITH CIRCLES

WEEKLY SMALL
GROUP CATECHESIS

3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A



SUNDAY GOSPEL

Light of Faith

Matthew 4:12-23

Hearing that John had been arrested he went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali.

In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled:

'Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!
Way of the sea on the far side of
Jordan, Galilee of the nations!

The people that lived in darkness
has seen a great light; on those who
dwell in the land and shadow of
death a light has dawned.'

From that moment Jesus began
his preaching with the message,
'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven
is close at hand'.

As he was walking by the Sea
of Galilee he saw two brothers,
Simon, who was called Peter, and
his brother Andrew; they were
making a cast in the lake with
their net, for they were fishermen.

And he said to them, 'Follow me
and I will make you fishers of
men'.

And they left their nets at once
and followed him.

Going on from there he saw
another pair of brothers, James
son of Zebedee and his brother
John; they were in their boat with
their father Zebedee, mending
their nets, and he called them.

At once, leaving the boat and
their father, they followed him. ■

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Fr Paul Maunder OCD

Only by the gift of faith do we know that Jesus the Son of Mary is also the eternal pre-existing Son of God. Before the resurrection people could not know who Jesus really was, because the Spirit had not yet been given. Even Jesus' closest and most intimate friends did not know him as they did after his resurrection. He was longing to entrust himself to them but could not do so at that time. As he said, "It would be too much for you now". Perhaps even those who knew him on earth by special grace, such as Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Simeon, John the Baptist, and Peter, could not know and possess him as fully as after the resurrection.

It was only after the resurrection that he could at last give himself completely to those he loved in the mystery of divine communion. Such is the momentous case with us now. In this light St Teresa of Avila's famous definition of prayer takes on full meaning indeed. "Mental (interior) prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us." (L 8.5). ■

FROM POPE FRANCIS

“Faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love, a love which precedes us and upon which we can lean for security and for building our lives. Transformed by this love, we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see; we realize that it contains a great promise of fulfilment, and that a vision of the future opens up before us. Faith, received from God as a supernatural gift, becomes a light for our way, guiding our journey through time.”

(Lumen Fidei #4)

“Once we discover the full light of Christ’s love, we realize that each of the loves in our own lives had always contained a ray of that light, and we understand its ultimate destination. That fact that our human loves contain that ray of light also helps us to see how all love is meant to share in the complete self-gift of the Son of God for our sake. In this circular movement, the light of faith illumines all our human relationships, which can then be lived in union with the gentle love of Christ.”

(Lumen Fidei #32)

“Faith is not a light which scatters all our darkness, but a lamp which guides our steps in the night and suffices for the journey. To those who suffer, God does not provide arguments which explain everything; rather, his response is that of an accompanying presence, a history of goodness which touches every story of suffering and opens up a ray of light. In Christ, God himself wishes to share this path with us and to offer us his gaze so that we might see the light within it.”

(Lumen Fidei #57)

TALKING POINTS

1. This week's reflections focus on Jesus and our faith in him a light which transforms our lives, especially our times of darkness and trouble. In what way has this been a reality in your life?
2. Prayer, an intimate sharing between you and Jesus, is the key to accessing the benefits and comforts of faith. In what ways do you nurture your connection with him?

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for each other: Ask about and pray for the needs of the group members.

Individuals might pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

Response: *Jesus, open our hearts to the light of your love.*

Reflect: Spend some time with Jesus reflecting on how each of the people you love and who love you reflect a ‘ray of his own divine light’ as Pope Francis suggests.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, you sent your Son as a light for our world. Through our faith and acts of love may we reflect ever more deeply and truly the light of this love for the people we encounter. Amen.

