

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 8, 2026

The Power of God.

Share your bread with the hungry.

Letting your light shine.

rvb.

**“If you bestow your bread on the hungry
and satisfy the afflicted;
then light shall rise for you in the darkness,
and the gloom shall become for you like midday.” -Isaiah.**

A story is told about men and women, some bound for heaven and others for hell, who sat around a banquet table. Each person was given a 10-foot pole with a hook at the end. The object was to serve yourself from the table and to feed yourself.

Some of the individuals tried in vain to feed themselves but they could not. They were then escorted into the hell fires of Dante's Inferno. Others discovered they could only eat from the table by feeding one another. These individuals were given wedding garments and were invited to enter the realm of the intensely bright light known as heaven.

The story of the “loaves and fishes” is comprised of either a “berakah” – a blessing which praises the wonders of God and/or a “Eucharistic – giving thanks or gratitude for the goodness of God. This blessing and/or thanksgiving is found in all four synoptic gospels: Matthew 14.13-21 – Blessing; Matthew 15.32-39 – Thanks; Luke 9.10-17 – Blessing; John 6.1-15 – Thanks; Mark 6.32-44 – Blessing and Mark 8.1-10 – Thanks (Bread) and Blessing (Fish).

Jesus is the unexpected gift of God which transforms the situation from hunger to fullness and from death to life. Feeding is a Resurrection event – “You give them something to eat.”

Quotations for you to ponder –

1. **“The one thing we can never get enough of is love. And the one thing we never give enough of is love.” -Henry Miller.**
2. **“Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every year find you to be a better human being.” -Ben Franklin.”**
3. **“One day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful.” -Sigmund Freud.**
4. **“What happens when people open their hearts? They get better.” -Haruki Murakami.**
5. **“I have decided to stick to love...Hate is too great a burden to bear. -Martin Luther King.**

“It is the uncompromising expression of divine righteousness directed to all who proclaim and give testimony to the reality of Jesus in their lives...Its words are still powerful to rebuke and to inspire, to challenge and to confront, to prick consciences and to offer hope for a better world.” – Edward Ciuba, theologian.

“It is in Jesus that we live, move, and have our being.” Acts 17:28.

Blessings upon you and your loved ones – peace, happiness, and holiness be with you.”

Roger J. Vanden Busch

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Isaiah 58:7-10

Thus says 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,
and your wound shall quickly be healed;
your vindication shall go before you,
and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.**

**Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer,
you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!**

**If you remove from your midst
oppression, false accusation and malicious speech;
if you bestow your bread on the hungry
and satisfy the afflicted;
then light shall rise for you in the darkness,
and the gloom shall become for you like midday.**

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

Today's readings challenge us to reach out to others in a way that is loving, supportive, and compassionate. Isaiah proclaims his eloquent words, "Share your bread with the hungry, clothe the naked...then your light will break forth like the dawn." Paul says, "...speaking nothing of

Jesus Christ crucified.” Matthew’s Good News is being a light for all to see and salt for everyone to taste.

Third Isaiah’s reading composes his words of hopeful wisdom to the Israelites who have returned from exile. He reminds those who were exiled, (or deported to a detention center in Texas by ICE) “You know what it was like when you were in exile, and what it is like today. While in exile, you had very little, but you managed to survive because you shared what you had, ministered to others in need, and did not turn your back on your own.” “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.” In a recent report on January 22, 2026, Liam and his father, Adrian Alexander Conejo Arias, were arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents earlier this month.

Both father and son were imprisoned (now released) in Texas along with other immigrant families abducted by the administration, living in conditions that critics have described in horrific terms. Michigan-based attorney Eric Lee, who has clients within the facility, has said it is a “horrible, horrible place,” with “putrid” drinking water and food that includes “bugs,” dirt and other contaminants. Are you listening ICE?

“Share your bread with the hungry” The description of how guards treat people inside the prison is equally alarming. “The guards are just as tough as the guards at the adult facilities. This is not a place that you would want to have your child be for even 15 minutes,” he said. Are you listening ICE? **“Shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own.”** The rent is due in Minneapolis, neighbors are helping with the rent of families targeted by ICE to avoid eviction. Are you listening ICE?

In this chapter four divisions are evident: verses 1-5 focus on the rebuke of the people for the emptiness of their rituals; verses 6-12 (today’s reading) reveal the prophet counseling the people to feed the hungry, shelter the poor, and clothe the naked. Helping alleviate social injustice issues, many are systemic, are the foundation stone of the bible’s message **then and now:** verses 13-14 are full of the blessings awaiting the people if God’s holy day is remembered; and verses 14-18 is an exaltation of the importance of God’s holy day.

A young lad of thirteen was watching a neighbor polishing his new Corvette. The car was sleek as the red paint gleamed in the afternoon sun. The boy watched in silence. Finally, he approached the man and

asked, "Where did you get such a neat car?" The neighbor responded, "My brother gave it to me." The boy replied, "I wish..."

and then paused. The neighbor thought the boy was going to say, "I wish I had a car like yours." However, the boy completed his thoughtful pause, "I wish I could be a brother like that."

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

R. (4a) The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

or:

R. Alleluia.

**Light shines through the darkness for the upright;
he is gracious and merciful and just.**

**Well for the man who is gracious and lends,
who conducts his affairs with justice.**

R. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

or:

R. Alleluia.

**He shall never be moved;
the just one shall be in everlasting remembrance.**

**An evil report he shall not fear;
his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.**

R. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

or:

R. Alleluia.

His heart is steadfast; he shall not fear.

Lavishly he gives to the poor;

His justice shall endure forever;

his horn shall be exalted in glory.

R. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

Reading 2

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

**When I came to you, brothers and sisters,
proclaiming the mystery of God,
I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom.
For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you
except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.**

**I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling,
and my message and my proclamation
were not with persuasive words of wisdom,
but with a demonstration of Spirit and power,
so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom
but on the power of God.**

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

In the reading from Paul, he reminds the Christian community of the importance of God's wisdom as opposed to the wisdom of the worldly philosophers. Although, I prefer a both/and approach and not an either/or approach. Why? Theologian, Richard McBrien offers this perspective, "The concept of faith seeking reason/understanding is a central theme in Christian theology of faith seeking understanding. It emphasizes the relationship between faith and reason, suggesting that faith in God and revealed in Jesus prompts a questioning search for a deeper understanding. This concept is translated from the Latin, 'fides

quaerens intellectum,' and reflects the belief that knowledge of God comes before faith in Him, but faith in God brings with it a constant understanding, thus faith and reason work together to discern a deeper comprehensive of the Divine.” – “Catholicism.”

St. Thomas Aquinas is credited with baptizing Greek philosophy – instead of rejecting it, he assimilates its insights into Christian theology – Again, McBrien offers the following insight, “St. Thomas Aquinas’ influence on philosophy is profound and multifaceted. He is often credited with baptizing Greek philosophy into Christian theology, a process that involved integrating Aristotelian philosophy with Christian teachings. Aquinas’ works, such as the “Summa Theologica” and “Summa Contra Gentiles” are foundational texts in Aquinas’ the study of Christian theology and philosophy. His approach to natural theology and the development of Thomism have had a lasting impact on the fields of metaphysics, ethics, and the philosophy of nature. Aquinas’ synthesis of Aristotelian ideas with Christian principles has shaped the way we understand the relationship between reason and faith, and the nature of God. His teachings continue to be a cornerstone of Christian thought and a model for the integration of philosophy and theology.” – “Catholicism.”

Alleluia

John 8:12

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

**I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life.**

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples:

"You are the salt of the earth.

But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned?

**It is no longer good for anything
but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.**

You are the light of the world.

A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.

**Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket;
it is set on a lampstand,
where it gives light to all in the house.**

**Just so, your light must shine before others,
that they may see your good deeds
and glorify your heavenly Father."**

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

For the next three weeks we will delve into the theological depths, meaning, and message of Matthew chapter 5. In today's Gospel two similes are given about the believer, namely, salt and light. The one banishes corruption and the other dispels darkness. One enhances the

outside and the other preserves the inside. Are we functioning in this two-fold way? The Sermon on the Mount, chapters 5-7, takes the Christian to the limit.

A young boy sat in the darkness of his room and peered through his bedroom window. He was watching a lamplighter making his nightly rounds. One by one, the lamplighter set aflame the gas streetlamps. He was so absorbed that he did not hear his mother call him for dinner. She came to his room and exclaimed, "Didn't you hear me call you three times?" He responded, "Mom, I am sorry, but I was watching the man in the street punch holes in the darkness." We are challenged to punch holes in the darkness of the world especially by sharing our bread, sheltering the homeless, clothing those to protect them from weather, and challenging ICE to back off and back down by blowing whistles, participating in rallies, demonstrations, and writing and calling our Senators and Congressmen when ICE invade our neighborhoods, churches, malls, schools, and places of employment without due process.

Failing to act and be proactive are sins of *omission*. They are behaviors and actions that we should have done, yet we have not. If we will walk right with God, we must open our eyes and do what is our

loving duty before Him. The following is an email I sent to my 8th district Congressman, Tony Wied on January 27, 2026:

Congressman Wied- This forthcoming weekend, February 1, the scriptures are about the beatitudes - I focused on: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice” – Justice and peace stand and fall together. Love, respect for the dignity and worth of every human being - (DEI=of God in Latin) is the culmination of justice, and justice is the practical expression of love. How do the demands of justice in society and in political structures enter our self-examination as we cry out for our neighbors in Minneapolis who are ruthlessly murdered, beaten, forcefully taken from their homes, some half naked, and 5-year-olds taken from their parents, out of schools, churches, places of shopping, and employment. A good Samaritan from Green Bay, a graduate of Preble is murdered in cold blood execution style as he tends to a female fallen victim (what if she was your wife who was literally pushed, shoved, and knocked to the ground?) Have you made contact with Preble High School, will you visit there for a school assembly to honor one of their graduates who was murdered execution style - play the video, call for peace and social justice, the impact one of the graduates has made upon the world to stop, think about our injustices and inhumanity to one another. Vote against the bill on January 30 to re-fund ICE, impeach Hegseth, Miller, and Noem who are bold-face liars, evil-hearted, sadistic, and boot lickers for Trump.

Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., called for a full investigation after a federal agent fatally shot a man who was allegedly armed in Minneapolis on Saturday, calling the incident "incredibly disturbing." Cassidy joined a chorus of Democratic lawmakers raising questions following the shooting death of 37-year-old Minneapolis resident Alex J. Petti, who was killed by a Border Patrol agent on Saturday. -Internet. On January 30, 2026, Congress has to decide to refuse to fund ICE. "Let us live in a way to respect and enhance the freedom of others." -Nelson Mandela. Respectfully, Roger J. Vandn Busch

This prayer, "A General Confession of Sin," from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559 edition), expresses repentance for both sins of *commission* and *omission*:

"Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from our ways, like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have been offended by their holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders. Spare them, O God, who confess their faults. Restore them to be penitent, according to your promises declared unto humankind, in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his

sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of your holy name.”

Final prayer: Nourishing God, you call us to life a spirit of authentic and true asceticism by sharing our time, treasures, gifts, and talents with others being light and salt for the betterment of society. Amen.

Roger J. Vanden Busch – Blessing upon you and your loved ones.