

Impact

Bring faith to life.
Find life in faith.

Where is your light? Let it shine!

Jesus tells us to let our light shine. He says, "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 lamp stand, 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." (Mt 5:15-16)

Even the simplest task, when done in love, shines with the light of Christ. The parent who answers a child's cry in the middle of the night is love for the child, showing God's ever-watchful care. The teenager who helps a classmate with homework, even when he or she would rather be visiting with friends witnesses to Christ's mercy. The one who serves in the soup kitchen and the one who receives the food with gratitude give evidence of the mystery of the presence of the Holy Spirit who compels, strengthens and inspires us in times of bounty and in times of need.

We know that many times our actions are not filled with light. Whether out of haste, impatience, anger, or sheer disregard for others, we often fail to be vessels of God's presence, even when we could easily do so. Here is the rub: the light never stops shining. God will never stop loving you no matter how busy, stressed, or stubborn you are. God sent his son Jesus, to show us how to live in the light, and Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to give us the inspiration and the tools we need to share the light.

We are called to tip the scale more each day toward loving, serving, and giving. Recognizing our blessings, being mindful of God's grace, and responding with our lives, even (especially) when doing so calls us to sacrifice...that is the pattern of a life through which darkness is cast away and Christ's light is shown.

Each of us has particular talents and gifts, things only we can do to bring Christ's light to the world. Each of us has a "special something" that comes out when we are at our best. These talents, gifts, and abilities are not given to us to be taken for granted, to hide away through inaction. Rather, they're given to us for doing good, making the world a better place and giving glory to God in doing so.

Where is your light? Have you been hiding it? It's time to get it out and let it shine!



Impact this month

What is your "special something?" How do you contribute at home, work, ministry and service? Reflect on your gifts, talents, and abilities. Be mindful of the things you naturally do well. Make a mental note or create a list of these gifts and use them intentionally in social and work interactions.

Who are the people in need whom you encounter in your daily life, in your parish, city, and world? Is there a particular sort of situation or need that calls to your heart?

Explore ways you can use your gifts and talents to contribute to the needs that came to mind in your reflection. What parish ministry or local Catholic charity addresses the need? How might you get involved?

Make a resolution to use your gifts in your daily life and in service of others this month.

Let Christ's light shine through you.

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

You are a temple of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit dwells within you! When was the last time you gave this some thought? At times, what we believe as Catholic Christians may seem distant or abstract, with little bearing on the way we live our daily lives. Then, something happens that

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.



No hands, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands. Yours are the feet. Yours are the eyes. You are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

– St. Teresa of Avila

prompts reflection, or study, or conversation with another, and faith comes to life. The Sunday readings this month remind us of a vital belief that is sometimes under appreciated: as baptized members of Christ's Body, we are indeed imbued with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Remembering this, we recognize our call to live as stewards of that presence.

There are likely times when we lose sight of God's presence within, however. We may become focused on things rather than on God and the people around us; we might sink into anger, fear, or resentment of another; we may simply become busy, too busy to think about who we are, or who we are called to be. Through it all, God is with us, inviting us to a deeper friendship with him.

There is more. Knowing that the Holy Spirit is with us, we more readily realize that every person is of value, created in God's image, priceless and precious. Our actions on behalf of others are actions with and for God.

Faith 2020

by Leisa Anslinger

"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." (IS 58:7) I have to be honest with you. I find passages like the one we hear from Isaiah on February 9 very challenging. And this month seems to be filled with such messages. As God's people and followers of Jesus, those who are most in need should always be in our hearts, on our minds, with hands ready to serve. Let us let that sink in for a moment. It's probably easy for most of us to point to the food or clothing collection to which we donated in the past few months at our parish, or the special collection to which we gave at Christmas time. But our readings this week, and in fact, the whole of the gospel, tell us that we are called to something more, something deeper. Because, as has often been noted by spiritual writers, this is about who we are because it is about *whose* we are.

Our sisters and brothers who are in need should be in our hearts because they are in God's heart. We must share, shelter, clothe, and be attentive to the vulnerable among us because they belong to us, as they belong to God. I may have written here before that one of the most striking talks I have encountered was given by Sr. Elinor Ford about twenty-five years ago. In it she said, "I belong to God and God needs me." Don't mistake me, it is not as though God is a needy, distant deity who uses us like pawns in a game. Rather, God *needs* us to act as Christ's people in the world because, as St. Teresa of Avila put it so well, "Christ has not body now on earth but yours."

So here is my challenge to all of us. Throughout this month as we begin or close out our day, let us ask God to show us the people or situations in which the Lord needs us to bear Christ's presence, healing, or care. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts so that they overflow with love as does God's heart, and make us ready to act out of this great love which cannot be contained. May we experience what Isaiah foretold centuries ago: "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." I have no doubt that this will be so! Because, as we go beyond ourselves for others, we will see the very light of Christ which we hope to share, casting out all darkness and gloom and bringing in its stead comfort, consolation, and peace.

