

*You are  
the light of  
the world*

*Matthew 5:14*

## Reflection:

July 2023

Jesus categorically declared to the multitudes who gathered to listen to him, "You are the light of the world!" This was His unprecedented way of awakening them to their call to permeate the darkness of the world in which they lived.

The Sermon on the Mount was, in fact, Jesus' manifesto of the new way of life He came to bring about - a life abounding with joy! His listeners were people from varied backgrounds and life experiences. How could they be the light of the world? Jesus saw something in them that no one else saw. He said "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The word 'whoever' is an all-encompassing word and anyone who chooses to follow Him ardently is guaranteed by Jesus to become the light that illumines the world. Those who listened to the beatitudes and chose to follow Him indeed became the light that brought salvation and hope to those in the dungeons of darkness.

Today, Jesus speaks personally to each one of us, "You are the light of the world". Irrespective of our stature, past failures, strengths, or weaknesses, Jesus is calling us to become His light in our homes, workplaces, parishes, friendship groups, communities and wherever He sends us. His Word will become light within us if we radically follow Him in the power of the Spirit. He sees the potential in us. Do we?

St. Paul echoes, "for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8). It would mean faithfully embracing our pillars so that we become more like him. St. Chromatius says, "If we fail to live in the light, we shall, to our condemnation and that of others, be veiling over and obscuring by our infidelity the light men so desperately need." Are we progressively becoming the light of the world or are we failing to live the light?

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, speaks also of a city that is set on a hill. This is a city that cannot be hidden, whose light shines on and guides those who live around, yet are scattered and lost in darkness. The Jesus Youth community is a "city" that needs to be "set on a hill", in order to illuminate the world! In fact, a city's light depends on the brightness of the lamp that lights each house on the hilltop, though the size and style of the houses are immaterial in the dark. Likewise, when each Jesus Youth shines out as a joyful missionary disciple in Christ and brings light to the lives of those who have plunged into the darkness of the world, the community becomes a beacon of light to the world! The Holy Spirit comes in as "oil" in our "lamps" and we collaborate with Him with our "wicks" of willingness to follow him as true disciples of Christ! How wonderful and meaningful our lives will be when we respond to Jesus' call to become the light of the world!! Pope St John Paul II dreamed, 'Even a tiny flame lifts the heavy lid of night. How much more light will you make, all together, if you bond as one in the communion of the Church!'

The saints answered this call to be the light and they still shine through the example of their lives. As Jesus Youth, let us also answer this call to be the light of the world, to be the best "lamp" we can be, in the house we are placed in and help our communities be the luminous "city set on a hill". Let us seek the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our mother, the cause of our joy, that with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we too may embrace our call to be the light of the world and press on towards that goal.

- Felix Roy David

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