

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

The Light That Sails Through His Voice

By Ken Woodley

If the Roman Empire had written the Sermon on the Mount, it might have sounded like this:

“Blessed are the rich in spirit, for they will get even richer.

“Blessed are those with no feelings, for they shall hurt everyone without caring.

“Blessed are the strong, for they shall take everything on earth.

The human race continues to produce people who have not only thought and spoken such words, in their own way, but acted them out, too. They cause great wounds, and time can't come close to healing them all.

For some, “The Golden Rule” is: “Gold rules.” Or power. Or anything they believe will let them lord themselves over everyone else.

Beware of those who live by this code:

“Punch the other cheek, too.”

“Do unto others. Again and again and again.”

Jesus tells us, in today's Gospel lesson, that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Those were astonishingly revolutionary things to say in a world in which only the very wealthy and those in power thought of themselves in such terms. The poor, struggling and downtrodden people listening to Jesus would have been just as amazed to think of themselves in that way as we are today.

The world, of course, tries to smother the light of Jesus' words. Tiberius was emperor of Rome in Jesus' day. One imagines the emperor's alternative advice to his cronies and legions:

“You are the salt of the earth. Corner the market on pepper.”

“You are the light of the world. Turn it off.”

When the world shouts that all is darkness, let us cup a hand to an ear so that we don't miss a word that is being said on the mountainside by the Sea of Galilee.

Come, let us get a little closer to the spirit of what Jesus is saying.

Let us stand together and be poor in spirit when that is our honest feeling.

Let us mourn when we must.

Let us be meek, and hunger and thirst for righteousness.

We will strive for mercy and seek pureness of heart.

We will try to be peacemakers and season the earth with our “salt” and keep our light shining.

No, it won't always be easy but it will always be worth it.

We won't ever stop trying to be the best version of ourselves.

No matter what the world, or anyone in it, might shout at us.

Because the Jesus said we could.