

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 5:14-19

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

FYI (for further information and resources visit www.family.goarch.org)

Most of us are familiar with this passage. We have been told to let our light shine and to share it with others. When we look closely at this passage, we are reminded that our light is not to promote our own greatness but that it is a reflection of God's glory. This is important to remember—everything we do is for and because of God's grace. Another interesting point in this passage is the responsibility of teaching others about the faith through our actions. If our Christian witness reflects poorly, then our actions will be regarded in a bad light. This Gospel is also read when we commemorate certain Fathers of the Church who defended and preached the true faith against heresies and were "lights" for their own times.

FOR CONSIDERATION

- What is happening in this passage? What does Jesus mean by "let your light so shine"?
- How does Jesus come to fulfill the law? What does He have to say about teachers?
- Why is this Gospel important to our lives?

TO DO TOGETHER

- Light in Darkness—Before bedtime, gather your family in a dark room in front of an icon with a candle in front of it. Comment on how the candle shines light in the area immediately surrounding it. Have each member of your family take a candle and light it. Comment on how quickly the light expands. Discuss how we can carry the light of Christ with us every day.
- Teach by Actions—Tune in to a television show that your family normally watches. During it, pretend that the different characters are Christians. Discuss at the end of the show if their actions glorified God or glorified themselves before the world. Discuss how your actions witness your Orthodox Christian faith during your daily routines.
- Go to Vespers—Check with your parish to find out when Vespers are held and plan to attend as a family. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the service before going. You can find the text for Vespers at www.onlinechapel.goarch.org.

FINAL THOUGHT

There is a story about a man who was visiting a farm. One dark night he needed to go to the railroad station. The farmer gave the man a lantern to light his path, as well as the following important instructions: “See that glimmer of light in the distance? That’s the station. Head for that!” These two things gave the man just what he needed. The lamp lit the way for his feet and the light in the distance assured him he was headed in the right direction.

*—Adapted from **Daily Vitamins for Spiritual Growth, Vol. 2** by Anthony Coniaris*

A CLOSING PRAYER

*O joyful light of the holy glory of the immortal Father, the heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ. Now that we have reached the setting of the sun and behold the evening light, we sing to God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is fitting at all times to praise you with cheerful voices, O Son of God, the Giver of life. Behold, the world sings your glory. —From the **Service of Vespers***

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- *Light Through Darkness: The Orthodox Tradition* by John Chryssavgis— This book takes us on a journey into the heart of Orthodox spirituality. It is a spiritual quest that seeks another reality, another way of seeing things, a world of silence, mystery, and beauty that stretches backward over two thousand years and extends upward in prayer to eternity.
- *Keeper of the Light: Saint Macrina the Elder* by Bev Cooke—Readers of all ages will be fascinated by the story of St. Macrina the Elder, who had a profound influence on her grandchildren— St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Macrina the Younger. St. Macrina the Elder exemplifies a great witness of Orthodox Christian faith.
- *Come Receive the Light* (www.receive.org)—An Orthodox Christian radio program that airs talks on a variety of spiritually edifying topics.