

The 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time — February 9, 2020

What a beautiful selection of readings set before us today, as we reflect on ourselves as Church and Community of Jesus Christ. Isaiah's proclamation in the First Reading is so wholesome :

“ 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.”

What is my Wound what is our Wound ????

Wow! how great is that Readingsuch a beautiful summary of the whole Gospel what we are all called to be, and called to do in Him! You Agree ?

How well it rows in with Jesus' words in the Gospel :

“You are the salt of the earth. But what 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.”

We are salt diffusing and bringing flavor to the lives of those around us sharing the light of Christ and building up His Kingdom Right ? But, sometimes that salt becomes “salty”and here in lies the struggle It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under foot.

The Gospel is an extraordinary challenge in all of our lives. The Gospel serves a two-fold purpose in the lives of all would-be followers of Jesus Christ :

“To comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable.”

It is a two-edged sword ! And it constantly invites us to broaden our horizons. As followers, we all have a natural affinity to the comforting aspect it is when it challenges me to get out of myself and my comfortable space, that the Gospel becomes very contentious.

We have been together now for some 87,600 hours, give or take a little (that is 10 years) and the challenge of the Gospel has been very engaging. Some things have worked well, and others have not. But we have most assuredly seen some great blessings. I provided a brief summary of that last week, in sharing an overview of my

10 years as pastor with you. Today, I should like to review with you some of the issues related to the past two years.

The Building Committee met yesterday to determine where we have landed with all of our work and discussions and deliberations. At the end of our meeting, one of our senior members declared, "this committee is now officially dissolved." That is a truth. I should like to speak clearly today about our experience, and I would like to say to all of you the same things I said to the committee and to the staff, so that there is no misrepresentation of my word.

I want to sincerely thank you, the members of the Committee, for your exceedingly generous response in terms of time and talent and service. We had some difficult and 'salty' exchanges from time to time but everybody, to their credit, hung on in there. You are some of the greatest people I have ever worked with. Thank you for your time and energy and your personal commitment to this process. You inspired me by your faithfulness and commitment. You showed up for meetings in the early morning, at noontime, and in the evenings. You continued to meet when I was in Ireland, and your devotion to this process was exemplary throughout. Though your work was maligned, and undermined on many occasions, you continued to be faithful to the process. You kept before you, at every stage, what was most important for our parish, and where you felt the Lord was leading us. What a great gift Thank you !

Even as we met yesterday, the decision was very split among us in regard to the future, some believing that we still needed to move forward and trust the power that has been guiding our decision making. However, the decision you, our family, made is pretty clear. We do not need to proceed with plans to build a new church. For all members of the committee there was a sadness to this reality. Because, from the outset, there was among the Committee members a trust and belief that God had blessed us both spiritually and financially these past years, was continuing to bless us, and was providing the opportunity to improve ourselves and our environment.

I can stand before you and tell you, without hesitation, that there never was any manipulation of figures, facts, or agenda we followed the facts and the data at every point. There was nothing hidden in the decisions that we presented to you ! It appeared to some that we couldn't make up our minds, and that is indeed true at times because of the grave matter of the facts.

Last week, I gave you a quote from leading a church through change titled, "It Isn't Easy" ...It certainly is not ! This week, I would like to give you another quote which I think sheds great light on our journey : **"Everyone carries 2 Buckets"**

"Everyone carries around 2 buckets with them : a bucket of water and a bucket of gasoline. One fuels change, and the other puts it out. Water fuels change

because it douses the fire of resistance. Gasoline puts change out because it fuels the fire of resistance. Anytime a person listens to a complaint and says, 'I understand how you would feel that way' without redirecting that person, it pours gasoline on the situation and validates the complaint."

When we use too much gasoline and fuel the resistance, it makes it extremely difficult to discover the truth.

I had a friend come to visit me recently, and she began the conversation by saying, **"I haven't told this to any of my friends because I am afraid they will judge my husband unfairly, and they will always hold that prejudice. I love him, and I want to work through this without the prejudice of my friends."**

It was a most profound moment in my life. My response to her was How did God give you such wisdom ?!

When one gets to that point I do not want sympathy for me I do not want supporters for where I am at I simply want to work through this struggle this wound they have certainly journeyed far in the Christian life.

Teams travel at the speed of Trust ! (Repeat)

So what is my wound what is our wound ?

—Fr. Gerry Hurley