

FEBRUARY 5, 2017



# FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



ISAIAH 58:7-10

PSALM 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

MATTHEW 5:13-16

## REFLECTION

Over the course of his eleven years as an outreach worker with the homeless, my husband has known 196 people who have died while living on the streets of Denver. Some died violently, others from the effects of addiction, mental illness, or chronic disease. My husband knew them all by name and many of their personal stories. It is heartbreaking that so many have died on our city streets (and there are hundreds more; the 196 are just the people he personally knew). It's also heartbreaking that my husband carries these wounds of grief and loss. He carries that grief, though, because in knowing these abandoned women and men, he bears witness to their dignity. Our friends are amazed that he has been able to stick with this line of work for so long. Yet, he has been given an unsentimental spirituality that allows him to deal with dark situations so that he can be a light for others. It's never about him, never "look at how great I am for helping these people"—this is how he's been able to endure for so long. His life is a living witness to Isaiah's instructions and Matthew's Beatitudes, and the simple deeds he does give glory back to God. In today's readings, the Lord calls us to feed the hungry, to shelter the homeless, and to clothe the naked. God's glory and the dignity of all is revealed in these tender actions—this is the deep lesson at the heart of today's readings.

## ACTION

"Light shall rise for you in the darkness" (Isaiah 58:10c). How powerful that the poor become a light for the world to see, and more importantly, that they reveal the face of God! The light that breaks forth is like a moment of clarity when we see things as they really are. God, in his glory, is present all the time, but the humblest of people and the simplest of actions pull back the curtain and give the world a glimpse of who God is and where we can find God. Serving others is the "right" thing to do, it makes the world a better place and it can even make us feel great. But most importantly, we serve others because all of creation is holy, created by God. When we serve others, we serve GOD. So if you are feeling lost, reach out and be a light for someone else; you just may find that you are not alone. And most of all, your actions will point back to the goodness of God.



## JOURNALING QUESTIONS



● Many times teens are required to do a service project. Have you ever given thought to the reasons behind this requirement? Why is it good to serve others? How have you been served or shown the light of God in those you have served?