

Third Sunday in Ordinary time Year A (St. Jude Parish) By Fr. Ayub

“Light shines in the darkness.”

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We gather today under a powerful and consoling image: **darkness and light**. Every one of us understands these images, not only with our minds but with our lives. We know what darkness feels like—fear, confusion, grief, division, sin, injustice, loneliness. And we also know what light feels like—hope, clarity, forgiveness, truth, peace, and love. Into this very human experience, God speaks today with a promise that echoes across centuries:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”

God’s Light Breaks Into Our Darkness: The readings of this Third Sunday of Ordinary Time are not abstract theology; they are God’s response to real suffering. Isaiah speaks to people crushed by war, exile, and humiliation. They were not living in comfortable darkness, but in *deep shadow*. And it is precisely there—not after they escape, not when they deserve it—that God lights a flame of hope.

Matthew tells us clearly: **this light has a face and a name—Jesus of Nazareth**. When Jesus begins his public ministry, he does not go to Jerusalem, the center of power and religion. He goes to Galilee, a borderland, a mixed and wounded place, often looked down upon. Light does not wait for perfect conditions. Light enters where darkness is thickest.

From Darkness to Light: The Kingdom Is Near: Jesus’ first words are strikingly simple and urgent: *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

The “Kingdom of Heaven” is not a distant reward after death, nor a dreamy escape from this world. It is **God’s reign breaking into ordinary life—here and now**. Wherever God’s will is lived, wherever mercy overcomes cruelty, wherever truth defeats lies, wherever love replaces hatred—that is where the Kingdom shines.

To live in darkness is to believe that nothing can change, that injustice is normal, that violence is inevitable, that division is permanent. Jesus comes to shatter that lie. His light reveals that another way of living is possible—God’s way.

But there is a condition: **repentance**. Repentance is not simply feeling bad about past sins. It is a *turning around*. It is choosing to walk in a new direction. It is allowing the light of Christ to expose what no longer belongs in us—resentment, pride, selfishness, indifference—and giving God permission to transform us.

Called to Follow: Leaving the Nets: Immediately after proclaiming the Kingdom, Jesus calls four ordinary fishermen. He does not choose scholars or the powerful. He chooses working men with rough hands and simple hearts. And his call is direct:

“Follow me.”

Their response is dramatic and challenging, *they immediately left their nets*. The nets were their security, their income, their identity. Following Jesus meant risk, uncertainty, and trust.

This moment asks us a serious question: **What are our nets?**

What holds us back from fully following Christ?

Is it fear of change? Comfort? Habits of sin? Division in our families or communities? Our nets may feel safe, but they can also keep us stuck in darkness.

To follow Christ is to allow his light to reorder our priorities and to shape our choices—how we speak, how we forgive, how we treat the poor, how we care for creation, how we build unity instead of division.

One Light, One Mission: In the Second Reading, St. Paul addresses a community torn apart by division. Some say, “I belong to Paul,” others, “I belong to Apollos.” Paul cuts through this darkness with clarity: **it is Christ who was crucified for us, not our preferences, not our factions, not our egos.**

The light we carry is not our own brilliance. It is the light of Christ. A divided Church dims that light. A humble, united Church allows it to shine.

Lessons for Our Lives Today

1. **God enters our darkness before we are ready.** Never believe your life is too broken for Christ’s light.
2. **The Kingdom begins now.** Every act of justice, mercy, and love allows God’s light to grow.
3. **Following Jesus requires letting go.** We cannot cling to our nets and walk into the light at the same time.
4. **We are called to be light-bearers.** The world does not need louder Christians, but brighter ones.

Dear brothers and sisters, a real Christian is not known by how much they speak about Christ, but by **the light they leave behind**—in their family, their workplace, their parish, and their world.

Question for Meditation: What darkness in my life is Christ inviting me to step out of today—and what “net” must I leave behind so that his light may shine more clearly through me?

May the Lord, who is our light and our salvation, give us the courage to follow him—and the grace to illuminate the path for others. God bless you.