Suggested Opening Song: Make Us True Servants, #225

During the long winter we become keenly aware of the value of sunshine. The sun rises later in the morning and sets earlier in the afternoon; quite often it's gray and cloudy all day. Today we hear Jesus tell his disciples that they are to shine their light for all to see, as a lamp on a lampstand does. This winter, may we spread Christ's light to the world, bringing joy and life to darkness and gloom.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 144
I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow as we say*) ***and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*** **For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Introductory Rite:
Greeting:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 12
Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:
Keep your family safe. O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:
First Reading p. 100
A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah *Isaiah 58:7-10*

Thus says the LORD: 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.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 122:4-5, 6-7, 8-9*

R/. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.
R/. The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

Light shines through the darkness for the upright; he is gracious and merciful and just.
Well for the man who is gracious and lends, who conducts his affairs with justice. **R/.**

He shall never be moved; the just one shall be in everlasting remembrance.
An evil report he shall not fear; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD. **R/.**

His heart is steadfast; he shall not fear.
Lavishly he gives to the poor; His justice shall endure forever; his horn shall be exalted in glory. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians *1 Corinthians 2:1-5*

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel *Matthew 5:13-16*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew **Glory to you, O Lord**

Jesus said to his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth. But 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. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection on the Word:

- Later in Matthew's Gospel, when Jesus speaks to his disciples about the last judgment, his words sound very much like Isaiah's do today. In both cases, we are told to share what we have with those in need. In fact, both Isaiah and Jesus specifically mention feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. However, Jesus adds another dimension. Jesus teaches us that when we do so, we're not just doing it for that person in need, we are doing it

for him. He challenges us to see him in the person in need. In responding to their need, Isaiah tells us, our light will overcome the darkness. That light will also illuminate the face of Jesus in the person whose need we are satisfying.

- In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells his disciples that while he is in the world, he is the light of the world. In today's Gospel, Jesus calls his disciples the light of the world. We are called to be that light now. However, Jesus is actually still in the world. We incarnate Jesus when we act as he did, caring for those in need. Jesus is also present in that person in need, as he taught his disciples in the context of the last judgment. Finally, the Lord is present in the act of generosity itself. An act of charity reflects the gift of the Lord that we have received from God.

- In most cases, if we give something away, we no longer have that thing. Giving food or clothing or money means our pantry or closet or bank account has less. But there are exceptions. One is light. When we open a door or window shade to allow light to spread, the light doesn't get dimmer by its source. When we light someone else's candle with our own, our own candle remains just as bright. Putting a light in a bushel basket does not "conserve" the light. Putting it on a lampstand widens the lit area. Spreading light does not diminish its intensity or brightness at all. Another exception is love. Treating someone else with love does not exhaust our supply even one little bit; in fact, acts of love multiply the love within us and in the world, engendering more and greater acts of love. In spreading light and love, we participate in God's expansive plan for the world.

Question of the Week
How can I and my friends increase the light we shine in our community?

Prayer of the Faithful:
Isaiah promises that the Lord hears our prayers when we share with those in need, so let us now pray for those in need all over the world.

- For the Church, that we may shine Christ's light in the world by feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, liberating the oppressed, and clothing the naked, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- That our elected leaders may work to reduce hunger, homelessness, and oppression in our wealthy nation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For married couples, that their love may be a source of light for their families and all those around them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those who suffer from chronic illness, and for their caregivers and health care personnel, that they may see God's blessings in the difficulties they face each day, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For our parish, that we may be salt of the earth and a light in the darkness through our ministries that reach out to those in our community in need, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

God of light, you created light to overcome the darkness, sent your Son to be the light of the world, and gave us the power to spread light in your name. Hear the prayers we make today and shine your light of love and forgiveness upon us all. We ask this and all our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 180
Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:
The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:
Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:
O God, who have willed that we be partakers in the one Bread and the one Chalice, grant us, we pray, so to live that, made one in Christ, we may joyfully bear fruit for the salvation of the world.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

Concluding Rite:
Final Blessing:
May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: Christ, Be Our Light, #218