

## **What does it mean, as the people of the Church, to be “the light to the world?”**

This is an interesting question to consider especially during Lent. On Ash Wednesday, the gospel reading at Mass is from the Sermon on the Mount. We hear Jesus say: ***“Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father.”*** (Mt. 6:1) We are told to give alms secretly, to pray in private, and to fast without letting others know. It sounds like we are not to let our light shine to the world.

But in the same Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also says: ***“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.”*** (Mt. 5:14-16)

We are called to be holy, but we are also called to lead others to holiness as well; to lead others to Christ. We do this by our example and by our witness; what we say and what we do. In the Constitution of the Church, given at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council, we read: ***“Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church.”***

But we must be careful that we pray, fast, and perform works of charity for the right reasons. We do these things not to bring glory to ourselves, but to bring glory to God. Let us be careful that we keep our intentions pure this Lenten season.

**Deacon Joe**