

Fr. Jeff's Weekly Homily

**3rd Sunday in Ordinary
January 27, 2008**

READING 1: Isaiah 8:23-9:3

Anguish has taken wing, dispelled is darkness: for there is no gloom where but now there was distress. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.

Psalm 27

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?

READING 2: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose.

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:12-23

From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The people who have lived in darkness have seen a great light. Is this about then and now is now? What People? Know anyone living in darkness like that? His Holiness, the late, great, courageous John Paul II, labeled our country as a "culture of death." I hated that when he said it and I still hate it. But I believe anyone who turns away from God toward lesser pursuits is turning from life to death.

While consumerism is normative to every society and always has been, we, sadly, have moved beyond any norm to a compulsive drive that in fact distracts us from true happiness. It is so pervasive that every one of us participates. So our "common sense" is askew. Our country has been so lavishly blessed but what are we doing with our blessings? We have primary elections this week and a tax measure to vote on, so I am thinking a bit politically but please know I am not going to be partisan because I don't see any leaders in our country who offer hope. Our leaders are looking at stimulus packages for our struggling economy that will encourage more spending on more stuff. Our country is 9 Trillion dollars in debt and they are going to sink us deeper into debt. It seems they think so little of us that they believe, I think cynically, that we are like drunken sailors on pay day. Broke yesterday, binge shopping on the easy money, and broke tomorrow. The trouble with the good times is that there are consequences for

everything in this world and the day after the big night is usually painful.

We call ourselves the land of the free and equivocate choosing between shopping at Belk's or Dillard's, choosing between rooting for the Patriots or the Giants in the Super Bowl and choosing abortion as if they were all just freedom of choice. My friends, I think John Paul may have wisdom worth thinking about. The people living in darkness have seen a great light, but only if they open their eyes to see reality. The people living in darkness are us! We need Jesus Christ. We need to turn toward him. We need to turn off the i-pods and the "face book" and "my space" and get on our knees and start praying. We need to turn our face to God. The Word of God has been enfleshed! The Word of God has brought light to the people living in darkness, the question is, will we open our eyes and repent?

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