

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time (Family)

February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Just 3 days ago. Anyone know what is celebrated on February 2<sup>nd</sup>? I hoped you would say Ground Hog day. Since that's what usually comes to mind. And on Ground Hog day what happens? Puxsatawny Phil comes out of his home in the ground and if he sees his shadow, he predicts a long winter. (Just heard about Staten island Chuck who apparently has been more accurate than Phil in his predictions.)

February 2<sup>nd</sup> Groundhog day. But what else? It's the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple also called Candlemas day. It's 40 days after Christmas and used to be the end of the Christmas Season. On that day we remember how Jesus as an infant was "presented" to God in the temple and in the story there are two special people we hear about. One is Simeon, a very old man who was waiting for the Messiah and when he saw Jesus he said. "Here's the one we've been waiting for!". And he says "Now lord you can dismiss your servant for my own eyes have seen the light of revelation for the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel. And then Anna, the Prophetess, a respected elder in the temple sees the infant Jesus and tells everyone about him.

And at the end of the story we are told that they brought Jesus home to Nazareth where he grew in wisdom and grace. That's pretty cool to know, isn't it? Jesus was "your" age. Was he home schooled or did they have schools in Nazareth? He certainly learned a lot from his parents. They were the ones who taught him the scriptures, maybe with the local rabbi. Can you imagine Jesus hearing the passage from the prophet Isaiah we just heard? "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 the refugee” (OK I changed that).

“Then your light shall break forth like the dawn.”

Imagine Jesus hearing this for the first time and thinking, “That’s what Abba wants us to do, care for the poor, the homeless, the oppressed. And then when we call on God, God will answer Here I am!”

It’s pretty clear to Jesus and it should be to us that if we want our light to shine forth than we have to care for our neighbor.

But why Candlemas day? Why bless candles? Because Simeon calls Jesus the Light to the Gentiles. That’s why we have this Candle. The Jesus candle to remind us that Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

So that’s Feb.2<sup>nd</sup>. But what’s today? Superbowl Sunday! And I may want to hide under a bushel basket or find a whole in the ground like Puxsatawny Phil when I tell you this but I’m going to come out and say that I’m a Patriots Fan. After 40 years in NE, Yes I root for the Patriots. Although this year the Ravens quarterback Matt Ryan is a BC grad so I’m torn. But to tell you the truth I’m not a Big fan. I’m not a fan-a-tic. There’s only one person in the world that I’m a real “Fan” of. His name is Jesus. He’s the one who shows us how to live in love. So let’s take a few minutes with the lights off and the only light, the light of the Jesus Candle. And please join me in singing, Give Me Jesus.

**A Reflection for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time**  
**By Leslie Pella-Woo / It was the Women who stayed**

**Salt. Light. Wisdom.** These are the elements offered in this week’s readings. They are elements offered for our transformation, for

evangelism, and for community.

I imagine Jesus' followers looking uncertain, and maybe bewildered at the words of the Beatitudes...blessed are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, and so on. And then his talk gets so serious with warnings of persecution and abuse. Perhaps there was a long following silence and an awkward shuffling of feet or a self-conscious cough.

He recalls the crowd, recalls each to herself, **“Remember, you are salt...salt of the earth!”**

When I was in grade school I loved to play on the bars at recess. I spent all of recess learning and practicing fancy flips, going across the monkey bars, and swinging on rings. Now, a thing all us kids playing on the bars did was to lick our hands before doing a trick. It was such a strange sensation, licking my hands, and feeling the rough callouses on my palms and tasting their saltiness from sweat, sand, asphalt, and metal. It was an earthy combination and its zesty taste made me feel strong and capable.

I don't lick my hands anymore, and neither do I play on playground equipment. I wonder about my wildness, now tamed. I am too clean these days...too careful, too privileged, too busy.

How can I restore that wild flavor and reclaim it? Our salt – our earthiness – it is an essential part of what makes us who we are. From the Earth and her mineral richness we are made for one another and for the joyful, righteous Beatitude work of making the Beloved Community. We are salt! We are light!

It is as if Jesus is setting a table, preparing a festival meal. Here is good news! The table is set for us, and with our hands that have churned, reached out, and held things too big to manage and too small to see, we come together to be light. And together we shine.

I feel this most keenly during “eucharistic” moments: people coming together for a common purpose, with a common faith (be that a faith in humanity, a faith in God, or a hope for goodness and decency), to be vulnerable and to say: Here I am, here we are. And so we are

filled – salt and light – so that we may loose the bonds of injustice,  
share our bread with the hungry, bring the homeless into our houses,  
and cloth the naked.

The dawn is breaking. **Be zesty. Be Light.**