What comes to mind when you hear the word ***salvation***?
If you asked me that question, my first instinct would be to say "***heaven***," or what I ***hope*** happens when I die. And while that instinct isn't wrong, it's very much incomplete. Today, we're invited into a much richer and deeper understanding of salvation—one that begins with God, is given as a gift, and is meant to be shared.

Isaiah's prophesy clearly states that ***salvation originates with God.*** It's not something we can earn by faithfully coming to Mass, for example. Nor is it something we possess for ourselves. In fact, Scripture consistently demonstrates that God's gifts are entrusted to us for the sake of others.

Through the pen of Isaiah, God addresses Israel as a whole: *"You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."* This is a commissioning. God chooses a people so that His glory might be made known ***through*** them. Yet the context is crucial. Israel is exiled in Babylon—displaced, discouraged, and far from home. I wonder how this prophesy of hope was received by the Israelites because Salvation, for them, meant returning to Jerusalem and reclaiming the Promised Land. In actual fact, it meant coming to the realisation that while they had left God, God had never left them. They were being called and commissioned to an identity and purpose that was greater than their current state.

Then comes the startling expansion of that commissioning: *"I will make you a light to the nations, so that* ***my salvation*** *may reach the ends of the earth."* God's plan was always larger than Israel's return home. Even in exile, even in weakness, they were being called to carry God's light beyond themselves.

When we place ourselves inside this Scripture, a question naturally arises: ***what might God be asking of me, of you, of us?*** For much of my own faith journey, I understood ***serving God*** primarily as going to Mass. And that truly matters—especially when we worship fully,

consciously, and actively through singing, keenly articulating the Mass responses and praying. But being God's servant also means allowing the gifts we receive to shape ***how*** we serve each other both ***inside*** and ***beyond*** these walls, particularly in difficult seasons of life.

Isaiah's language gives us an important clue as to ***what*** God might be asking of me, you, us. *"I will make you a light to the nations,* [the Lord says] *so that* **my salvation** *may reach the ends of the earth."* The OT Hebrew word used for "***my salvation***" is *yeshuah*. In the Greek of the NT, it becomes *Iēsous*. In other words, God's salvation has a name and ***His name is Jesus***. And so ***if*** God's salvation ***is*** to reach the ends of the earth, God's desire is that the person of ***Jesus*** be made known and loved to the ends of the earth. That mission didn't end with Israel, or with the apostles because it continues with those who encounter God's salvation in this life.

The Gospel makes this beautifully concrete. John the Baptist ***sees*** Jesus approaching and immediately says to his friends, "Look, there is the Lamb of God." John recognises salvation in front of him, and he cannot keep that recognition to himself. How many people do you know who don't know Jesus? Probably a lot, but the question which precedes this is "do ***I*** know Jesus," or "do I ***desire*** to get to know Jesus?"

Friends, God never ceases inviting us—steadily and patiently—to know, love, serve, and follow Jesus, and to help others do the same. That invitation always begins with personal encounter because we cannot share what we have not first received. Each time we choose to pray, each time we listen to the Word being proclaimed, and certainly each time we come before the Eucharist, salvation comes toward us again in the person of Jesus Christ. And so, as we seek to recognise Him and welcome Him, may we become a light for others so that His salvation reaches the 150,000 people who live within the geographical boundary of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Parish. Amen.