

Called to let Christ's life shine out

Madison Catholic Herald Sunday scripture column

Written by Jeff Hedglen

Thursday, Nov. 22, 2012 -- 12:00 AM

When I was 16 years old, I went to a youth conference where Sr. Thea Bowman was the presenter.

Close to 1,000 teens were packed into a room and this slight woman held everyone's attention as she extended her index finger and began to sing in a way I had never before experienced, "This little light of mine . . ."

She sang slow and sweet, calm and powerful, inviting and engaging, soothing and challenging, all at the same time. It was a moment I have never forgotten.

As we all joined in the familiar chorus, the song was transformed from a fun campfire singalong to a commissioning of young disciples.

People of all ages, especially youth and young adults, are searching for purpose.

In the 1990s, Michael W. Smith sang a song that expresses this plight perfectly: "Lookin' for a reason /Roamin' through the night to find /My place in this world /Not a lot to lean on /I need your light to help me find /My place in this world."

Knowing our purpose, our place in this world is a powerful thing. In this week's Gospel, Jesus reveals his purpose when he says, "For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth."

Jesus solidly knew what he was put on this earth to do. He revealed the truth in every breath he took, and in his last breath this testimony shook the universe.

To be sure, our purpose may not have as lasting of an impact as Jesus' purpose, but it is no less true that we each are here for a reason.

We are all called to let our "little light" shine in our own way, in our own circumstances and in our own circles of friends and family. Each flickering flame of lived faith is unique, and it dispels the darkness in important ways.

So let us all raise our index finger and to ourselves softly sing, "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!"

The *Madison Catholic Herald* website is: madisoncatholicerald.org
Click on the "Faith" heading, then "Spirituality" and you will find the mention of Thea Bowman.