

## HOMILY by Fr. Anthony Davis

**“You are the salt of the earth,” Jesus says, “You are the light of the world.”**

February 9, 2020

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Is 58:7-10; 1 Cor 2:1-5; Mt 5:13-16

**“You are the salt of the earth,” Jesus says. “You are the light of the world.”** In two short phrases, Jesus describes the identity and mission of his followers. In our day, he might have sent a Twitter: “Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your heavenly Father.” Here is the summary of the life and calling of all Christians. The reverse side for the need for light is that there is darkness to find our way through. And salt at least in pre-refrigeration days, was needed to stop food from getting rotten. Thus, Jesus makes us salt and light in a world in a world of darkness and decay.

In today’s first reading, the prophet Isaiah offers practical ways to make to make this. “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 your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn.”

*Yes, tangible love offered to people who need it most: this is what it means to be light for people in darkness and salt for people who need a taste of hope.* Indeed, when it comes to salt and light very little is needed for these elements to accomplish their purpose. One candle can transform a completely dark room, but too much light can damage your eyes. A small amount of salt can bring out the flavors in food, but too much makes food inedible. Could this be a caution for Christians who think that, in order to influence, we need vast amounts of cultural and political power to do the work we are called to do?

Now there is, of course darkness around us that needs transforming, and decay that needs reversing so people can flourish. But with the image of salt and light in mind, our task is simply to do the work God has given us to do the small and daily deeds of faith with intention, purpose, and the confidence born of faith.

**Life message:** We need to act as traces of salt, and live our short lives as candles of light, by sharing in Christ's ministry of being the light of the world, dispelling the darkness. A lamp or light is a guide to make clear the way. So then, a Christian must make the way clear to others. That is to say, a Christian must of necessity be an example.

*“The light which Jesus speaks of in the Gospel is the light of Faith, God’s free gift, which enlightens the heart and clarifies the mind. Hence our personal encounter with Christ bathes life in new Light, sets us on the right path, and sends us out to be his witnesses.”* Pope St. John Paul II.

That’s why Jesus is saying to us, “You are the Salt of the earth...Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” (Mt 5:16).

**Conclusion:** How do we achieve this goal? We all know that light exposes everything hidden by darkness. (Cf. Jn 3:19; 1 Cor. 4:5). For instance St. Paul says: "There was one time when you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Well then, live as children of light. Light produces every kind of goodness and justice and truth...Take no part then, in vain deeds done in darkness; rather, condemn them" (Eph 5:8–11).

From the foregoing then, I dare say that: *When our teens, baptized and confirmed, get pregnant and do drugs at the same rate as the general teenage population; when our marriages end in divorce at the same rate as the rest of society; when we cheat in business, or lie, steal, and cheat on our spouses at the same statistical level as those who say they are not Christians – SOMETHING IS RADICALLY WRONG!!!*

Let's therefore, pause for a moment and ask ourselves whether we are carrying the Light which can be seen, the Light which warns, the Light which guides. Beloved, these are the Lights which God shines through our Christian living. That's why Jesus says today: **"You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world."**