

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (Mt 5:13-16): Jesus said to his disciples: “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”

“You are the light of the world”

Fr. Josep FONT i Gallart
(Getafe, Spain)

Today, the Gospel clearly urges us to become witness to Christ. And it invites us in two different ways, which, apparently, may look contradictory: the salt and the light.

The salt cannot be seen but can be perceived; it can be tasted, relished. There are many persons that “can hardly be perceived”, as they are like “little ants” working and doing good all the time. At their side one can savor peace, serenity and joy. As it is said at present, their “radiations” are good.

Light, instead, cannot be hidden. There are persons that “can be seen from afar”: Mother Therese of Calcutta, the Pope, a parish's rector. They hold important positions because of their natural leadership or because of their concrete priesthood. They are “brought into the limelight”. As today's Gospel says «on top of a mountain» or on a “lamp stand” (cf. Mt 5:14-15).

We are all called to be salt and light. For over 30 years of His hidden life in Nazareth, Jesus Himself was also “salt”. It is being said that, once, while he was playing, someone asked St. Aloysius Gonzaga what would he do if he knew that within a few minutes he would die. “I would keep on playing”, he answered. He

would go on carrying out his normal every- day's life, and making life pleasant for his play pals.

It may be we are called to be light. We are quite clearly so when we avow our own faith in difficult moments. Martyrs are great luminaries. And in certain environments, today, the mere fact of attending Mass may be the subject of jokes and general mockery. Going to Mass is already being “light”. And light is always detected and seen, no matter how small it may be. A little light may change the night.

Let us pray to the Lord for one another that we always know how to be salt. And how to be light, if need be. That our daily chores are carried out in such a way that through our good deeds people may praise our Father who is in Heaven (cf. Mt 5:16).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Again He refers to the world, to the entire orb; light that must be understood in a spiritual sense. With these words, the Lord insists on the perfection of life that his disciples must lead.” (Saint John Chrysostom)

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“You, who have accepted in your hearts the saving message of Christ, are therefore the salt of the earth because you must contribute to prevent the deterioration of the life of the man or that it may be corrupted by pursuing false values.” (Saint John Paul II)

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“The fidelity of the baptized is a primordial condition for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the Church's mission in the world. In order that the message of salvation can show the power of its truth and radiance before men, it must be authenticated by the witness of the life of Christians (...).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 2044)