June 27th: Memorial of Saint Cyril of Alexandria, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Gospel text (*Mt* 5:13-19): 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.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"If salt loses its taste, it is no longer good for anything"

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Today we venerate an invincible defender of the divine motherhood of Mary. St. Cyril of Alexandria (370/80-444) led a fierce battle around the Council of Ephesus against Bishop Nestorius, who claimed that Mary was simply the "Mother of Christ," rejecting the title of "Mother of God." The underlying problem was the denial of the divinity of Jesus Christ. But if Jesus is not God, then… who will save us? It is too easy to speak of Jesus as simply equated with other religious leaders or teachers. "But if salt loses its taste, (…) It is no longer good for anything" (Mt 5:13); if the divinity of Christ is diluted, his sacrifice, his resurrection… what hope is left for us?

The Alexandrian bishop, known as the "guardian of accuracy," was a firm witness to Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, emphasizing above all unity: "Only one is the Son, only one the Lord Jesus Christ, both before the Incarnation and after the Incarnation."

Saint Cyril, aware of the popularity and deep rootedness of the title "Mother of God" in the faith of the faithful People, warned Nestorius: "…be very careful about what you say to the people in matters of

teaching and of your thought on the faith. You should bear in mind that to scandalise even one of these little ones that believe in Christ lays you open to unendurable wrath."

"Not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place" (Mt 5:18): another great quality that we admire in Saint Cyril of Alexandria is his fidelity to the tradition of the Church. Cyril is also known as the "seal of the Fathers": He "made constant reference to earlier ecclesiastical authors (among them, above all, Athanasius), to demonstrate the continuity of his theology with the tradition of the Church, 'in which he recognised the guarantee of continuity with the Apostles and with Christ himself'" (Benedict XVI). This is the light we need!

Grant, Lord God, that we who recognize Mary as the true "Mother of God" may be saved through the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ.