

FATHER MARK SCHULTE
HOMILY
FIFTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME (A)
FEBRUARY 8, 2026

“Salt and Light”

My Brothers and Sisters, great crowds now begin to follow Jesus. He is going to lead them away from the city to the mountain and it will be there that He will address them at length on many moral and spiritual topics. He begins His Sermon on the Mount by describing those people who are favored or “blessed” by God. We know this description as the beatitudes, those who are blest, the hungry, meek, and sorrowful, in other words, those who are more or less rejected by the world. Jesus describes these people of God as salt and light (Mt 5:13-16).

Salt and light are two basic elements that we tend to take for granted because they are so abundant. Salt is a mineral used for many things. In this context it is primarily used to season and preserve food. Salt is also essential for maintaining human life. It occurs naturally in our food but also exists in great mineral deposits and in all of the oceans.

The person filled with faith in God is a salty, savory person, because the salt of their faith can and does help build and sustain the faith of others. The faith filled person is a tool in God’s hands for spreading the Christian faith. When that faith is lost, their salt is said to go flat. It cannot preserve or sustain life. It becomes worthless as Jesus said. It is thrown out and trampled underfoot, meaning that person without faith is condemned to perdition.

Light has its source in the sun, and the sun is a symbol for Jesus who gives light to all things. The light of the sun is essential for all living things just as Jesus is the source of all life.

Light is also a symbol for a living faith. When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, His light shines out from within us to others. All liturgical candles are a symbol of the light of Christ; altar candles, votive candles, and the Easter Candle. During a baptism, a smaller candle is lit from the large Easter Candle and is then given to the parents and godparents. They are called to keep the light of faith burning bright in the life of the child (CCC 1243).

Those people who are filled with this salt and light live out their lives in deeds of charity on behalf of others. When this is done Jesus said that the Glory of God the Father is revealed in them. God is the source of all good things. Our good deeds are evidence of His goodness. Through people of salt and light the world can see how good God the Father is thus giving Glory to God in the process.

The world is darkened by sin. People of faith bring light to a darkened world. A person who lacks goodness is often referred to as an unsavory person; disagreeable, distasteful, morally offensive. Food that is seasoned with salt is often called “savory”,

because salt brings out the flavor of food. An unsavory person, a person of unsavory character, lacks the salt of faith. Jesus said, “If salt goes flat (that is a person without faith) what is it good for?” It is useless unless its savor can be restored. The grace of God can restore the faith of a person, as well as the grace of God working through a faith filled person. A person of salt and light by their witness can help restore the unsavory character of the sinner. Likewise, where there is light the darkness is pushed back. The person of faith is the light of God pushing back the darkness in a world darkened by sin.

Jesus introduced His lengthy sermon on the mount by emphasizing the importance of people filled with salt and light. People of salt and light are savory characters bringing freshness and life to the world. People in darkness are unsavory characters who spoil everything they touch.

Choose to be a person filled with salt and light, instruments of life and faith to the honor of God the Father for His eternal Glory.

NOTE: CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church