

Salt and light, about which we hear in this Sunday's Gospel, are good images for describing those who practice the Beatitudes, that is, those who are disciples of Jesus, and they show the importance of good works. In other words, everyone needs to strive for personal holiness – and for the holiness of others.

*Holiness* means “whole.” A person who is holy is entirely himself and lives in union with God but not without concern for the needs of others. For St. Thomas Aquinas, holiness signifies “purity” and “firmness.” The person of holiness is unstained by the world and remains steadfast in his unity with God.

To remain unstained by the world is to live “in the world but not of the world.” A work from as early as AD 130, *The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus*, makes this clear: “[Christians] dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners ... They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all ... They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers ... yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred. To sum up all in one word – what the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world” (Ch 5-6).

“Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (Matthew 5:16).

Father Frei