

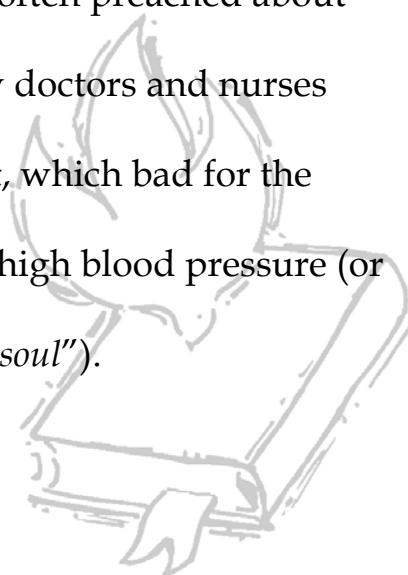
**Homily**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday OT - A**  
In English  
February 07-08, 2026

Is 58: 7-10  
Ps 112: 4-5, 6-7, 8-9  
1 Cor 2: 1-5  
Mt 5: 13-16



When I have approached this homily in previous years, I have often referred to a restaurant called Joe's Hot Dogs and a sign from their ordering window that says, "We Salt Everything". I have often preached about

the oversaturation of salt in our society and how doctors and nurses would really encourage people to lay off the salt, which is bad for the blood pressure and can lead to a heart attack or high blood pressure (or as I have preached, "*bad for the body; great for the soul*").



I decided to go online this week and wanted to find out how can you enhance salt's flavor in a dish? Now, the obvious answer to all of this is perhaps you just add more salt to the dish. When I researched this question, the response that the computer gave back to me instead thought I was asking how to *lessen* the salt's taste in a dish rather than enhance it.

For instance, the internet search might tell me that if I wanted to *reduce* the salt's flavor in a dish, I could add some vinegar or lemon to a dish. The web search also implied that you could reduce the flavor of salt by adding to a dish some type of sweetening agent such as honey, sugar, or corn syrup. In my research, I could not find a good answer to enhance salt's flavor to a dish except... *for adding more salt*, because normally that seems to be the only way suggested to salt a dish.

I have preached on numerous occasions that salt is really good for the soul but bad for the doctors and nurses. In the soul, you cannot put the salt under a bushel basket. You cannot put enough salt in the world of faith; in the world of faith, you should *never* hide a light under a bushel basket. In the world of faith, salt and light need to overflow so

generously, what St. Bonaventure would call a “fountain fullness” that never stops overflowing.

If we wish to get to heaven, then we are mandated to be overly generous to others. If people see that our disposition is pure, then, in my experience, people of faith will respond accordingly. Last week, I was visiting a woman in the hospital this week, and she told me that in reality, she did not have a lot of friends. She did not have a lot of visitors and she asked me at the end of our conversation if I would pray for her. I keep reminding myself, as I did for this woman, that every time we pray at the liturgy, even if no physical bodies are present, we are in solidarity with the communion of saints who join us in prayer. I told the woman that I would hope that when we pray, everyone in purgatory and heaven pray for us and with us, since we are all on the path together to be one with God.

What I really as thinking in my conversation with this woman is that because we built a relationship with God and because I brought Christ to her, at least one person was with her already... and that was God (I make two people, in reality). My role as a priest is to bring Christ to the

people who are needy and afflicted. Because this woman saw me living out this role, she has responded in kind and told me she would pray for us.

I told the woman that we need to keep praying for each other because this is what it means to be “community,” “the bride of Christ,” us coming together to pray, play and work together to build up the kingdom of God. I also wanted to assure that family that no matter what happens in life, God is with them and with us, and the community is with them and us. That has got to be our disposition, to let the light shine forth, to let the salt pour out and offer its flavor.

As I was preparing for this homily and asking God to walk with me on this journey, I ended up receiving two checks in one day as, I hope, was God’s response to my prayers. One check was for \$10,000, a check that came from a woman in Scottsdale, AZ who was thankful for what we have been doing for our communities and one check for \$2,500 on behalf of a pew donation in the name of Dick Demack.

Dick was really loved at St. Patricks’ Church. An usher in his heyday, Dick so loved this church that he used to show up hours before the start

of the 4:00 p.m. to greet anyone walking through the doors. Dick used to sit with his wife in the back row of the Church (I call the Catholic “eat and run” section of the church – get communion and fly out the doors!). When Dick’s wife passed away, Dick then sat on the other side of the aisle he ushers. When Dick got a little bit older, he then could not attend Mass and was placed a care facility.

We kept remembering Dick at our liturgies because he was not forgotten, just like so many others. His heart, his light, his salt that he overflowingly offered our parishioners was such a great example for all of us, especially this priest.

As a challenge to our scriptures today, we need to ask how overflowingly we love those sitting next to us, especially the stranger, the outsider, the outcast and the forsaken. Do you have the disposition of Christ to love others as he loves us? That is the message that Isaiah presents from an Old Testament point of view. We need to keep feeding people, keep offering them drink, keep taking care of them. That is what Paul challenges us to do in his First Letter to the Corinthians, to correct, to guide, to form and to mold. In the gospel reading today, Jesus tells us,

not to let the salt lose its flavor and to let that flavor be enhanced (even if the internet has no way of telling us how to do this).

Essentially, what Matthew is doing is laying out a blueprint for living as a good Christian, a type of “textbook of faith” is you wish to a good Jewish Christian disciple, this is how you have to live. Matthew reinforces this message very clearly during his “Sermon on the Mount” which we are reading from Chapters 5-7, leading us up to and falling on Ash Wednesday and the beginning of our Lenten Season. Matthew’s version of the faith is challenging to serve as the light of the world and the salt of the earth for those around us.

In response, we need to keep supporting each other. When family members approach me and say, “Father, my children have this problem, or that problem. I am beside myself and I do not know what to do,” my answer is always, to live like St. Monica, to have a good heart, to pray for our kids and grandkids and to have a foundation of a Christian disposition. I challenge the parent to reflect on how God has not abandoned any of us in life and to allow God’s light to shine through us for the sake of the other.

I say the same to you as I say to them: let that love shine through. God's love may not solve the problems of the world, but at least God offers the faithful person as disposition of peace, knowing that if the Spirit that exists in our hearts and is guiding us, leading us and giving us comfort, at least we know we are not alone.



As a way of allowing that light to shine on a social level, to honor those who pour the salt and shine the light in God's name, we invite you to attend our **BORDER TOWN POLKA MASS AND APPRECIATION DINNER** on February 14<sup>th</sup>. As we have done in previous years, Ray Koncar and the Polka Mass-ters will lead us in music and then will entertain us at a

complementary dinner that you are all invited to attend. You are all invited to that complimentary dinner. We want you to be there because we want to support you; we want to serve you and we want to love you. This is what God mandates us to do in life – to love one another as God loves us.

If you try to go at it alone in the world, you are going to become angry, you are going to come bitter, you are going to lose that light that will be shielded in your heart. If you learn to love and join us as a community of faith, to follow the Lord's command to go in peace, to love and serve the Lord by the example of our life, then we are able to enter heaven together. So if you can make it on February 14<sup>th</sup>, please feel free to call our office to RSVP... or just come! This is not a dinner just for one group but for everyone, to build community with everyone, so everyone supports each other and everyone loves each other to share that light and take that salt and spread it generously in love for the sake of the people that we meet. This is our prayer.