

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time 'A' Cycle February 5, 2017

“You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.” These are great compliments which the Lord Jesus gives to his disciples, his original ones as well as his present ones, including all of us who are blessed, as well as challenged to be his disciples.

Let us explore what the Lord means when he uses these natural images of salt and light. Salt, unlike today’s refined variety, was often difficult to obtain. In the days before refrigeration, it was the only preservative of food. It also enhances and brings out the flavor of many foods. It was and is used as disinfectant and healing agent. Wages were often paid in salt, hence we get the term salary. It has always been a compliment when we describe someone as the salt of the earth.

Jesus’ disciples are called upon to preserve and safeguard God’s natural gifts of life and nature and friendship as well as the spiritual gift of faith. As disciples we are also charged with the duty to bring zest and joy by sharing with others our faith and charitable concern for one another and with all others.

Before electricity, light was carefully guarded in home and community fires. When night came, darkness prompted people to be cautious and afraid of the unknown. Light and its attendant warmth is a natural symbol of goodness and blessings.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we carry the light of his presence within us, our faith. The Lord also wants us to let this light shine outwardly by our actions and mutual concern for one another’s needs, material as well as spiritual.

We are happy tonight to welcome into our faith community two individuals who will become more fully the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Congratulations to Jeff and Bailey.

As we well know, salt can become contaminated and useless. Light can be dimmed and extinguished. This can happen also to the spiritual realities they represent. We pray that with God's grace we may protect and nurture these gifts. Each of us as disciples of Jesus are indeed special. We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.