

# Yr A Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time



**Matthew 5:13-16**

**13 Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.**

**14 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden.**

**15 No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. 16 In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the**

**praise to your Father in heaven.'**

Other readings: Isaiah 58:7-10 Psalm 111 (112) 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

We continue our reading of the great discourse of Jesus which we know as the Sermon on the Mount. Last week we read its famous opening verses, the Beatitudes. With statements such as 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' Jesus challenges our attitudes and our actions.

This week, as Jesus continues addressing the disciples, he uses two simple images, salt and light. We are familiar with the phrase 'salt of the earth' when it is applied to people judged to be really good, even exceptional, but not everyone will know that these are originally the words of Jesus. On reflection we might consider it rather strange. Someone who 'rubs salt in a wound' adds insult to injury. Such is not Jesus' meaning here. Rather we need to think of how salt enhances the taste of a meal.

Jesus is actually talking about salt which has lost its taste and which is good for nothing but to be thrown away. The challenge he is putting before the disciples is the risk of losing their zeal, losing their enthusiasm for his message, and thereby offering people something weak and insipid instead, something short of the good news. If we begin to present only the easy parts of the good news, we risk offering something which does not deliver the fulness of life.

The second image is that of light, a much easier image to understand. These words of Jesus have given rise to the popular phrase 'Don't hide your light under a bushel!' People often speak of 'following their dreams', considering that the way to self-fulfilment is to achieve 'what I want' regardless of others. The life-giving challenge Jesus brings is that we should allow our light to shine, but that it is the light given us by Christ. The true greatness of the Christian is to offer to others Jesus and all the hope that he brings, by lives which are transparently good, full of salt and light.

*Do we accept the fulness of the good news, or only the easy bits?*

*Do we allow our light to shine, or do we 'hide it under a bushel'?*

*We ask for the courage to live the gospel to the full.*

*We pray for strength to witness to the truth of the gospel for those we meet.*