

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-12

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.

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

REFLECTION OF POPE LEO XIV

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After proclaiming the Beatitudes, Jesus addresses those who put them into practice, saying that thanks to them the earth is no longer the same and the world is no longer in darkness. "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:13-14). Indeed, it is genuine joy that gives flavor to life and brings to light something that was not there before. This joy springs from a way of life, a way of inhabiting the earth and of living together that must be desired and chosen. It is the life that shines in Jesus, the new flavor of his words and deeds. After encountering Jesus in his poverty of spirit, his meekness and simplicity of heart, his hunger and thirst for justice, which unlocks mercy and peace as powers of transformation and reconciliation, those who would distance themselves from all this seem bland and dull.

The prophet Isaiah lists concrete gestures that overcome injustice: sharing bread with the hungry, bringing the poor and homeless into our homes, clothing those we see to be naked, without neglecting our neighbors and those in our own homes (cf. 58:7). The prophet continues, "then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily" (v. 8). On the one hand, there is light which cannot be hidden because it is as great as the sun that drives away

the darkness every morning; on the other hand, there is a wound that was once burning and is now healing.

Indeed, it is painful to lose flavor and give up joy; yet it is possible to have this wound in one's heart. Jesus seems to warn those who listen to him not to give up joy. Salt that has lost its flavor, he says, "is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot" (Mt 5:13). How many people — perhaps we ourselves — feel like they are worthless or broken. It is as if their light has been hidden. Jesus, however, proclaims a God who will never throw us away, a Father who cares for our names and our uniqueness. Every wound, even the deepest, will be healed by welcoming the word of the Beatitudes and setting us back on the path of the Gospel.

Moreover, deeds of openness and attention to others will rekindle joy. At the same time, however, through their simplicity such gestures put us at odds with the world. Jesus himself was tempted in the desert to follow other paths, to assert his identity, to laud it and have the world at his feet. Yet he rejected the paths that would have caused him to lose his true flavor, the one we find every Sunday in the Bread that is broken, which is a life given and a silent love.

Brothers and sisters, let us be nourished and enlightened by communion with Jesus. Without any boasting, we will then be like a city set on a hill, not simply visible, but also inviting and welcoming: the city of God where everyone, deep down, desires to live and find peace. Let us now turn our gaze and our prayers to Mary, the Gate of Heaven, that she may help us to become and remain disciples of her Son.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



Head: According to Jesus and this reflection, how does joy arise from the way we live rather than from what we have or achieve?



Heart: When have you felt your joy, hope, or sense of purpose grow dim or “lose flavour,” and what do you notice Jesus saying to you in that place?



Hands: What inner attitude, habit, or fear might God be inviting you to let go of so that your life can regain its flavour and light?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.