

## **Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time A2026**

In the Gospel of this morning our Lord says: “You are the salt of the earth”, “You are the light of the world”. Behind these words there is a truth our Lord wants us to bring to us about our relationship with the Father and with one another. The two elements of salt and light played a big role in the time of Jesus as it is today.

Let us talk, first, about the salt. The salt was connected with purity, preservation and flavoring of food. When we look just at its whiteness, we can understand why our Lord says that we have to be the salt of the earth.

In fact, one of the trends of our society today is its lowering of the standards of life. As Christians, we have to stand in the world as the people of moral standards of purity in what we think, say and do by our honesty, conscientiousness, respect of others, love of truth, etc.

The salt was also used to preserve food from corruption and putrefaction. Even today, in remote villages in Africa, where people do not have a refrigerator, they still use salt to keep things from spoiling. When our Lord uses this word, he wants us to be by our presence the ones who prevent things from going bad, corrupt and die.

Moreover, what would a dish be without salt? Those who have some medical condition know well that without salt, the food becomes insipid and tasteless. It is true that if the salt loses its saltiness, it is just useless. That is why as Christians we have to be the people who make a difference in the lives of others in the world.

Now let us talk about light. Each one of us can easily understand the meaning of light. A light is something which is above all to be seen. When our Lord says that we are the light of the world, he wants us to be visible in the world and not only in the Church. Our influence in the world should be made visible by the way we deal with the important problems affecting our society and our world.

Like the road lights which are used to regulate the traffic or the warning light at the estuary of a river, or a light that is used to lighten a house, as Christians, we have to be the ones who make the way clear to others. We have to be those who help others to reach their salvation by putting their lives into God’s hands. We have to be those who warn others about the risk they are running, especially the youngest, so that they may not lose their way to eternal life.

Now here is a question: Why is our Lord so obsessed with others? “You are the salt of the earth”; “You are the light of the world”; “Your light must shine before others”, he says. Is it not enough to be the salt for oneself or the light for oneself?

Well; beneath these statements of our Lord is hidden the ethical dimension of our faith. It is not only about my salvation, but also about the salvation of my fellows. Our personal faith should have an impact around us and in the world. Our personal salvation cannot be disconnected from the salvation of others. We cannot be content only for our salvation while many others are going to their loss. As we have a responsibility for our personal salvation, so we bear some responsibility for the salvation of our fellows. We can be to our fellows an occasion of fall or a chance for their salvation, a blessing or a curse.

Let me say it in other words: We are morally responsible for the salvation of our fellows. Of course, we have to care for ourselves, but we have to care also for others. If we do not do so, our pursuit of salvation becomes a selfish endeavor that prevents us from the possibility of being a chance for those in search of their salvation.

Does it mean that we have to act on behalf of our fellows when they do not want to do anything for their salvation? Not at all; the truth is that in matters of salvation each person is responsible before God and has to do whatever he should to acquire it. However, as Christians we have a duty defined by our faith to help each other to acquire salvation. That is why we are like the light and the salt to the world. The role of the salt, indeed, is to season the food so that it becomes tasty. The role of the light is to enlighten those who live in darkness. That is what we have to be to our fellows.

In other words, we are like the guides that lead others to know God and to love him. If we cannot do that, we fail in the profession of our own faith because we are mostly selfish in limiting the conception of salvation to ourselves. It is like a poor man who, by working hard, has become rich, but strives to prevent the neighbors from improving their situation lest they become like him.

Thus, by suggesting that we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, our Lord is inviting us to have a second look on our confession of faith. He wants us to have a real impact and a visible glow on people around us and in the world.

That is why he insists that “we let our light shine”, which literally means “Do not hide your light”. The consequence of such a perception is that we have to lead a Christian life that is enlightening to others and has influence in the world.

Let us ask the Lord the grace of keeping present before our eyes the double structure of our faith, namely the relationship with God and the relationship with our fellows. Let us ask him the courage to fulfill our spiritual duties toward him without neglecting our social duties toward others. May he give us the courage to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world for the glory of his name! Amen.

**Isaiah 58: 7-0; 1 Corinthians: 1-5; Matthew 5: 13-16**



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