

**1. Read (Seek)** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

**2. Meditate (Find)** — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

**3. Pray (Ask)** — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

**4. Contemplate (Taste)** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

[1] Merriam-Webster Dictionary

[2] <http://www.saltinstitute.org/Uses-benefits/Salt-in-history>

[3] Ex. 30:35; 2 Ki. 2:19-23; Ez. 16.4

[4] Lv. 2:13, Ez. 43:24 and Nu. 18:19; 2 Ch. 13:5, Ezra 4:14

[5] Sir. 39:26, Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 31.102

[6] Dt. 29:23; Je. 17:6

[7] Matthew 28:18-20

[8] Fernandez In Conversation with God, 34.1

[9] Benedict T. Viviano, O.P. "The Gospel According the Matthew," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. R. Brown; J. Fitzmyer; and R. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990), 23

[10] St. Augustine, *On the customs of the Catholic Church*, 1, 21

# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? Matthew 5:13-16** — Pg. 1

**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3

**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## Gospel Reading – Matthew 5:13-16 – Daily Roman Missal

Jesus said to his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

## Spiritual Reading

*Excerpt from Lumen Gentium*

*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*), No. 2, 16

The eternal Father, by a free and hidden plan of His own wisdom and goodness, created the whole world. His plan was to raise men to a participation of the divine life. Fallen in Adam, God the Father did not leave men to themselves, but ceaselessly offered helps to salvation, in view of Christ, the Redeemer "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." All the elect, before time began, the Father "foreknew and pre-destined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren." He planned to assemble in the holy Church all those who would believe in Christ. Already from the beginning of the world the foreshadowing of the Church took place. It was prepared in a remarkable way throughout the history of the people of Israel and by means of the Old Covenant. In the present era of time the Church was constituted and, by the outpouring of the Spirit, was made manifest. At the end of time it will gloriously achieve completion, when, as is read in the Fathers, all the just, from Adam and "from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect," will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church. Finally, those who have not yet received the Gospel are related in various ways to the people of God. In the first place we must recall the people to whom the testament and the promises were given and from whom Christ was born according to the flesh. On account of their fathers this people remains most dear to God, for God does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues. But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are the Mohammedans, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind. Nor is God far distant

**SIGN UP free for  
Link to Liturgy**



from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, for it is He who gives to all men life and breath and all things, and as Savior wills that all men be saved. Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel. She knows that it is given by Him who enlightens all men so that they may finally have life.

### **Salt of the Earth – Lesson and Discussion**

*“You are the salt of the earth”*

Right after preaching the Beatitudes during the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus turns his focus to his disciples by naming them with two metaphors. A metaphor is a word or phrase for one thing that is used to refer to another thing in order to show or suggest a likeness or similarity between them.[1] The first metaphor that Jesus uses to identify the disciples is comparing them to the ‘salt of the earth.’ Salt is a substance that is very familiar to us, if there is one thing that we love here in America it is salt. We put it on everything, and it is in almost everything we eat. More importantly, salt has been a staple to human civilization even before recorded history.[2] It is very interesting then for us to unpack what Jesus meant when he called his disciples the ‘salt of the earth.’

**Why does Jesus call his disciples the ‘salt of the earth’?** First, it is important to note that Jesus uses this metaphor to describe who the disciples already are and not about what they can be or will be in the future. Disciples of Jesus ARE the salt of the earth because that is what God created them to be. They have not earned this title, it is written into their very nature. Next, we must look at what Jesus meant by the phrase ‘salt of the earth.’ Salt imagery can be found throughout Scripture in a variety of uses which include: flavoring, preserving, a purifying/cleansing agent[3], a required addition to sacrifice (‘salt of the covenant’)[4], a fundamental human necessity[5], and used to render land unusable[6]. So, if salt is a necessary component to the earth that we live in, then the disciples must be a necessary component for the earth as well. The mission of the disciples is to be sown into the earth to purify it and make it worthy to be a sacrifice. The disciples are the salt of humankind; they spread the Word of God among all men and live as an example of faithful men of God. Just as salt is a fertilizer to promote vegetation; the disciples are that which prepares the soil of mankind for the Sower.

**What was Jesus’ audience when he said, “you are the salt of the earth”? Who is he speaking to when he says “you”?** Jesus’ audience during the Sermon on the Mount was the crowds of people that followed

him to the Mount, which included his disciples. By extension, however, he is speaking to all those men who would someday hear or read the Scriptures. This means that Jesus is speaking to us when he says ‘you are the salt of the earth’ since we have been baptized into the Catholic Church. All men and women who choose to follow Christ have the mission of evangelizing all mankind.

**How have Jesus’ disciples been the ‘salt of the earth’ throughout history?** Jesus’s public ministry took place in Israel, and he traveled only within her boundary. His mission was confined to a certain area, which is why the first apostles were so vital to the institution of the Church. Before ascending into Heaven, Jesus says to his disciples, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”[7] We see that Jesus sends his disciples out to evangelize the world by baptizing them and instructing them according to what they had been taught. The foundation that the apostles laid is the groundwork for the development of the Church; they passed on the words and actions of Jesus. From that institution, the Church has continuously grown and been preserved by the many disciples of Christ throughout the centuries. The Church and her members have been preserved from corruption, greed, and persecutions to bring wisdom to men by their words.[8] We see in Jesus’ last words in Matthew that He promises to be with them always which means that He has been with His disciples throughout history. His disciples are able to fulfill God’s Will in their lives because God is always with them.

**In today’s Gospel, Jesus warns us that salt can lose its taste and when that happens, “it is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” How can salt lose its flavor?** Salt, as a substance, cannot lose its taste or flavor unless something else is mixed in and dilutes it. However, in the Jewish tradition salt can become unclean and when it does, it must be thrown out.[9] In Israel, the salt that was thrown out was spread over the flat roofs covered in soil to harden the soil and stop leakage. This stresses the importance of our mission as disciples and the importance of us staying ‘clean’ and pure. We do not want to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

**What are some ways we, as the ‘salt of the earth,’ lose our flavor?** In our faith, Christ satisfies all of our needs. When we rely solely on this world to satisfy our needs, we can be assured that the world will not satisfy and that which we thought would satisfy will lose its taste. When we try to use the world’s “salt,” it can grow bland very quickly and we move on to something else. We must show self-control and temperance when using the “salt” of this world. We must use earthly goods, “according to their needs and duties, with the moderation of the person using them, and not of the one who attaches too much value to them and sees himself dragged down by them.”[10]