

## You Are Really Something!

**T**he description of the disciples found in today's Gospel is an impressive compliment—and an even greater challenge. Jesus tells them they are “salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13), bringing out the good taste of living. In other words, life would be bland and uninteresting without them. They are also the “light of the world” (Matthew 5:14), helping people find their way. Without them, others would stumble and fall. Jesus is telling them how important they are in the lives of others. They could each and all say: I am really something!

Such compliments are also a challenge. What must one do to be salt and light in the lives of others? The Isaian passage provides some suggestions: Share your bread with the hungry; shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked; don't turn your back on your own; remove from your midst oppression, false accusation, and malicious speech. In other words, to be salt or light is to meet the needs of the needy. This teaching of Jesus is not as easy as it might at first look.

Jesus is speaking to his disciples, his followers. They are not those who are simply curious about this itinerant preacher or remarkable healer. They have chosen to follow him, not merely from place to place, but to model their lives after his. Isn't that what we also claim to be—his followers? Haven't we promised to model our lives after his? If so, as both compliment and challenge he says to us as well, “You are really something!”

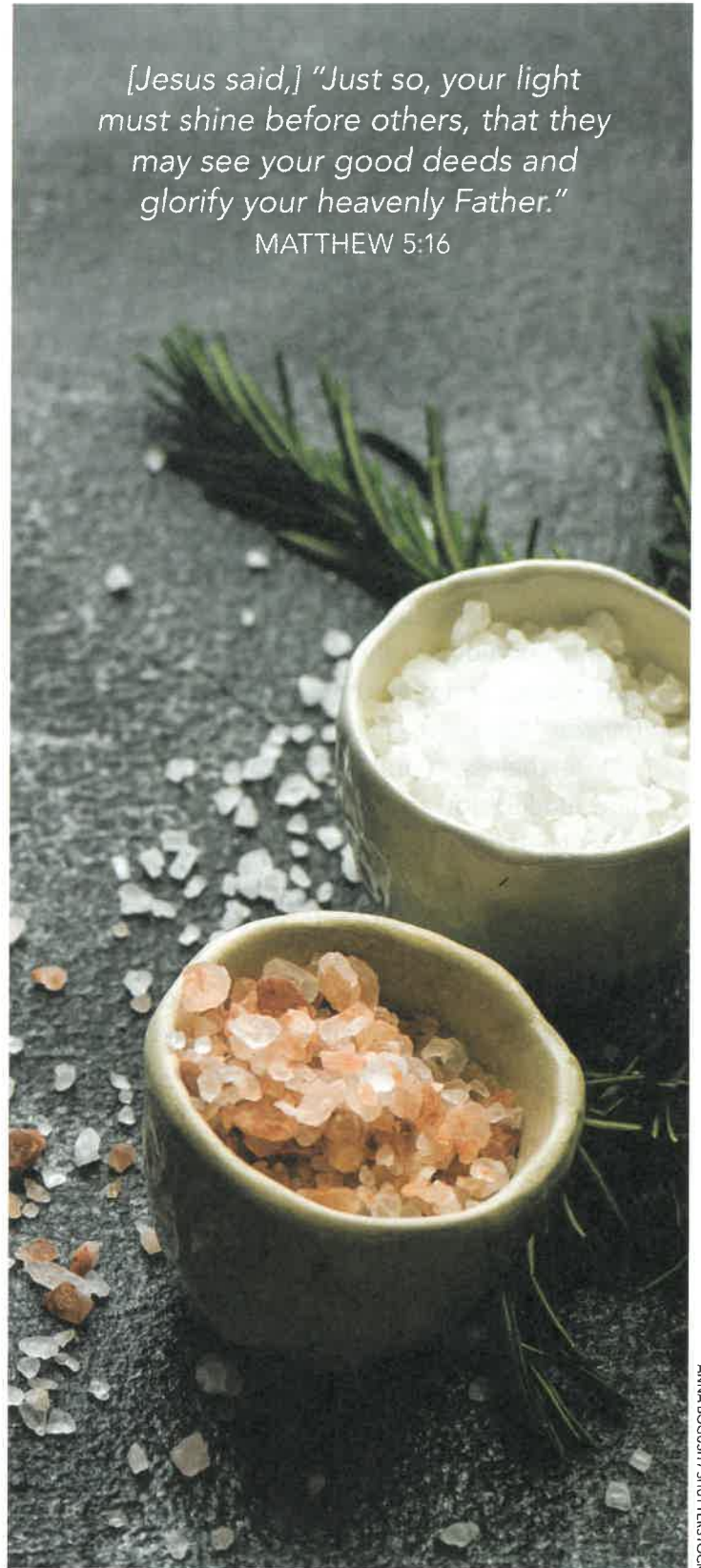
—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

### FOR *Reflection*

- ★ *In what ways do you already enrich or enlighten the lives of others?*
- ★ *In what ways is this compliment a challenge for you?*

*[Jesus said,] “Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”*

MATTHEW 5:16



# Dear Padre,

**My church spends too much on flower arrangements. Are they really needed?**

**F**lowers and plants in homes and other buildings create a sense of beauty and welcome. They also help lift the spirits of the infirm in hospitals and the pall of sadness from those who mourn a loved one. Similarly, flowers in churches awaken our senses, embody hospitality, and enliven our spirits. Moreover, living flowers and plants serve “as a reminder of the gift of life God has given to the human community” (“Built of Living Stones,” 129, USCCB, 2000).

Along with other church adornments—both fixed and movable—flowers enkindle in the worshiper a feeling of what St. Peter said at the transfiguration, “Lord, it is good that we are here” (Matthew 17:4, Luke 9:33). They add dignity to the sacred space and visually express the holiness of the mysteries celebrated there. “Sacred buildings and requisites for divine worship should be truly worthy and beautiful and be signs and symbols of heavenly realities” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 288).

Nevertheless, “floral decoration should always show moderation and be arranged around the altar rather than on the altar table” (*GIRM* 305). Restraint in floral decoration is the norm during Advent. It’s forbidden during Lent, except on Laetare Sunday and feasts, although simple compositions other than flowers are permissible.

To control costs, some parishes rely on volunteers with flower-arranging skills. Arrangements left behind at funerals and funeral homes and from church weddings are also offered for the benefit of the faithful.

—Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR  
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## A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*Christian life has to be a life that must blossom in works of charity, in doing what is good. But if you have no roots, you cannot blossom, and who is the root? Jesus! ... “What blossoms a tree bears come from what lies underneath it.” Never cut off Jesus’ roots.*

—GENERAL AUDIENCE, MARCH 21, 2018



## Calendar

### Monday

FEBRUARY 10  
*Saint Scholastica,  
Virgin*

1 Kgs 8:1–7, 9–13  
Mk 6:53–56

### Tuesday

FEBRUARY 11  
*Weekday*

1 Kgs 8:22–23, 27–30  
Mk 7:1–13

### Wednesday

FEBRUARY 12  
*Weekday*

1 Kgs 10:1–10  
Mk 7:14–23

### Thursday

FEBRUARY 13  
*Weekday*

1 Kgs 11:4–13  
Mk 7:24–30

### Friday

FEBRUARY 14  
*Sts. Cyril, Monk, and  
Methodius, Bishop*

1 Kgs 11:29–32;  
12:19  
Mk 7:31–37

### Saturday

FEBRUARY 15  
*Weekday*

1 Kgs 12:26–32;  
13:33–34  
Mk 8:1–10

### Sunday

FEBRUARY 16  
*Sixth Sunday in  
Ordinary Time*

Sir 15:15–20  
1 Cor 2:6–10  
Mt 5:17–37 or  
Mt 5:20–22a, 27–28,  
33–34a, 37