

Homily for Sunday Mass
February 9, 2020
Year A – Matthew 5:13-16
----Father Michael Grant George Cadotte----

I love salt. I love how it pops the flavor of food and its base taste. So much so, to my own detriment, I take a tiny little pill every morning called Lisinopril, an ACE inhibitor, to keep my blood pressure nice and low – which it is.

Salt even has a three-fold function – now there is a very trinitarian number! First, salt enhances food but is not food on its own. You don't eat or drink salt, but you sprinkle it around and about your food for the desired flavorful effect. Second, salt preserves food which was of vital import in the ancient world as they lacked means of preservation we enjoy today. Thirdly, salt represented purity.

So important was salt in the ancient world that in the vast Roman empire soldiers were paid in salt that they would then trade in the local currency where they were stationed. This periodic payment of salt was called a 'salarium' which in English became known as salary.

Our Lord tells us in today's reading to be the salt of the earth and that tells us that with all of God's creation it is without flavor and enrichment without each of us adding our own unique seasoning to all of life around us. That is exactly how important each and every one of us are in God's creation plan and how interconnected we are to each other's happiness in life. When we live out God's call to us for action we enrich and strengthen (that is we give flavor) to life. We also, at the same moment, bring the people of God together (preserve them) in God's favor. And as we do this as our base way of living, we purify ourselves through our actions towards others and their actions in return towards us. This is so because such actions creates light and God created light from the darkness and from that all of creation followed and so it is with doing good works, enriching the people and strengthening them with not only the Word but the good deeds it proclaims for us to do. When we do this we not only shine the inward light of God into the gloomy corners of our being but we radiate it outward into the world and bring forth a creation of love and fellowship to all we encounter so that they may in turn do the same.

So, we know what we need to do but what are the specific action items that make up flavoring and preserving of creation for the purity of all humanity? To answer that, let us go back and reflect on Isaiah's prophecy. Thus said the Lord...thus SAID THE LORD... "...share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless, clothe the naked...do not turn your back on your own [for]...if you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday" (Is 58:7-10).

And St. Matthew tells us that, "...your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (MT 5:16).

So, that is the call, the mission, the way to bring forth the Kingdom of God right here on earth. What it is not, is in hiding from people your true self. Not allowing yourself to get outside of your comfort zone and do good works, not living the Beatitudes taught by God – by Jesus Christ. To not have pity, to not forgive, to gossip and spread mischief and dissension against others – God's children just like you. When we live like this, and let us be very clear that we all have at

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times, we diminish (for at least that moment) that light that Isaiah talked so beautifully about and we not only allow some fellow child of God to go forward unaided but we increase the gloominess in our lives unwittingly. We fail, and fail miserably, to follow Jesus' teaching that we, "...must shine..." (MT 5:16).

And when we do these acts and let our light shine in the world, we help build God's kingdom with each other working together in faithful service and harmony – letting peace be on earth. The well-known African proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child' so rings true here. The people we encounter in life that are in need, you can fill in the blank as to what that need is but it matters not, are in fact children of God. It is, therefore, as members of God's creation, of the human race, that is to say the global village, our duty to care for them, love them, support them, and raise them is paramount to God's plan and desire of us.

This can be scary and even overwhelming but that is why we call our belief system faith. Giving flavor and unity to the world is too much, it is beyond our individual abilities. This is why we can only achieve success through our faith in God. As God will guide and use us in ways, we may not even fully understand, to achieve this success.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that there is no way to peace along the way of safety. For peace must be dared, it is itself the great venture and can never be safe. Peace is the opposite of security. To demand guarantees is to want to protect oneself. Peace means giving oneself completely to God's commandment, wanting no security, but in faith and obedience laying the destiny of the nations in the hand of Almighty God, not trying to direct it for selfish purposes. The challenges of life are won, not with weapons, but with God. They are won where the way leads to the cross.

AMEN

---Citations---

The New American Bible: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2010

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