

# LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL



FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
Year A

8<sup>th</sup> February 2026



## Matthew 5: 13-16

Matt. 5:13 [Jesus said,] “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

### Thought for the day

We can easily see how Jesus should be the light of the world. Even though the words are familiar, we are perhaps unaccustomed to reflecting on ourselves as the light of the world and salt of the earth. This is an act of profound trust *in us* by God. Jesus has faith in us to be bearers of his Good News in our time. How are we to be that? Not first by our words or even by our deeds. We are the light and salt on account of who we are as disciples. As the Gospel text puts it, *a city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden*. We cannot help being seen as his disciples, for that is who we are.

### Prayer

Jesus, we believe that you are the light of the world and that you call us to bear your light to the world. Help us to be authentic disciples of yours, not drawing attention to ourselves, but to you, the source of our light and life.

KIERAN O'MAHONY OSA – [www.tarsus.ie](http://www.tarsus.ie)

Jesus speaks of the danger that salt will become tasteless. St. John of the Cross puts it differently: “God forbid that the salt should begin to disappear, which, although it would seem from the outside that it works, would in fact be of no use, for it is certain that good works cannot be done except through the power of God.” In order to be the - salt of the earth- what is important is not activity, busyness or superficial leadership, but good works born of the love of God who works in us.

**JOSÉ A. PAGOLA** – *FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS YEAR A*

In this short reading, Jesus relies on two images, salt and light to drive home the significance of being a disciple. In telling them they are the salt of the earth, Jesus is speaking in a context where the vital role of salt is readily understood. It was used as a spice and a preservative and was present in every household. If, however, it became insipid it had to be thrown out. This is a forceful image for the community; it is a reminder that their calling is not for themselves, they are disciples for the sake of the world. The second image, that of light, is a universal one. Jesus was likened to a light shining on people who had sat in darkness. Now that image is transferred to his disciples. By means of their lives they will bring people to an awareness of God's goodness and the values of the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus.

**SEAN GOAN – *Let the Reader Understand Year A***

#### POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Jesus uses the image of salt as something that makes food tasty. Without it food can be tasteless. Who are the people who give zest to your life and make it enjoyable? For whom have you done this? When have you been particularly aware of your potential in this regard?
2. The second image is that of light. Who have been the people who have been a light for you, particularly in moments of darkness? For whom have you been a light? Recall these experiences and give thanks.
3. The images of salt and light can also be applied to communities to which we belong, a family, a parish, or other group. Thinking of the groups of which you are a member, how can the potential be enhanced to enrich the lives of members and offer them a guiding light? How can you make a contribution to this?

**JOHN BYRNE OSA – *Intercom***

It is a short passage which means that we can spend time on whichever of the images draws us. As always in the Bible, the images are not static and we must discover the movement within them, two movements in fact – one of sin and one of grace. We identify with both movements – repent of sin and celebrate the grace. The passage is a teaching of Jesus revealing to us the kind of person he was, and still is, living in the 'Jesus people' we meet. We allow them to challenge us both as individuals and as a church community. Salt gives taste. Remember people who have brought sparkle to your life at a time when it had become drab. Light presents a contrast with darkness. We remember good people coming into our lives, like day dawning after a long night. We remember our feelings so that we can be guided by our experience. Sometimes people hide a light under a tub because they want to keep it for themselves; we think of – the abuse of the notion of 'intellectual property' – resources like water, light and money kept in the hands of a few. Jesus teaching is a radical critique of the modern capitalist system.

**MICHEL DE VERTEUIL – *LECTIO DIVINA YEAR A***

#### **GO DEEPER - TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT**

*You can hide your 'divine spark', or you can let it shine. Jesus calls all of us to be people of light. What in your life is blocking your light from shining out to others?*

*What salt does for food, Christians are called to do for the world. You might recall someone who brought 'taste' to your life, encouraging you on your journey, offering hope, a new insight. What was their legacy?*