

A Pinch of Salt and A Dash of Light

Intro. In recent years, for our health we are encouraged to avoid salt. I don't use much salt on food anyway. But, I get plenty of salt from tortilla and potato chips. Occasionally I will eat low-salt versions. For centuries salt was an important part of food. Before refrigeration was invented, it was used to preserve food. If you have ever eaten salt cured ham, you know what salty is. We take light for granted until it goes dark as those of you who lost power in last week's storm Thursday know well. For the people of the Lord's time, salt and light were vital to their lives and became handy images for the Lord's teaching.

I. This passage comes during the Sermon on the Mount, the opening teaching given by the Lord. It is his mission statement. He began with the beatitudes

which turned upside down the usual expectations of life in those days. From the beginning of his work the Lord used images common to people's experience. The primary use of salt was to preserve food like fish and meat to get it from the field and the sea to the market. Much like today it was dug out of the ground. *Not* like today, it also had lots of impurities which affected its taste.

Not every home had light. People who afford an olive oil lamp used it to push back the darkness that people believed contained evil spirits and diseases like the plague. The Lord taught these qualities of salt and light identified those who followed him.

Concl. Salt like all spice can go stale. Light can dim or be extinguished. We know the years and obstacles take their toll on us as disciples. We *can* lose our flavor. Our light *can* dim or even go out.

How do we restore these qualities that mark the Lord's disciples? One way we can be reinvigorated is through prayer, the sacraments and the good works we do in the name of the Lord. Another way is our families and friends who often bring flavor and light back into our lives by their faith in God and their love of us. We are asked to be the salt that enhances our faith and the light that banishes the darkness of fear and sin. We do this in order to point to **not to ourselves** but *the Lord*. The world needs a pinch of salt and a dash of light. Think of a different meaning when you see on the back of a car the sticker, "Salt Life". Usually it means someone who likes to fish. But could describe us too.

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

February 9, 2020