

DEACON GEORGE'S HOMILY FOR FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

As usual, Jesus uses everyday similes to bring his teaching home to his hearers.

Now salt was essential for preserving and savouring meat and other foods. If the salt has ceased to have any power and flavour of salt, it was no longer of any use. It becomes **not** only useless, but dangerous, because if used, it will make meat **not** only unpalatable but unfit for human consumption, the meat will become putrid and decomposed.

To light a lamp and cover it with a basket was to render the lamp-light invisible and useless, keeping the room in darkness.

Today's similes, are part of Christ's sermon on the mount, and follow the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes, which are part of the sermon on the mount, is a synopsis of the new order of salvation which Christ established. Its doctrines are, **First**, the primacy of the **interior** spirit, in contrast to the **external** observance of the law of Moses, **Second**, the **love** of all people, as brothers and sisters, under the universal fatherhood of God, **Third**, **detachment** from the wealth and goods of this world. Not easy doctrines.

His disciples include, not only the Apostles, but all those among the crowds following him, who were anxious to learn his message, the messianic message of salvation, which they believed he had come to bring.

It was no less an authority, than Christ himself, who calls his **true** disciples, the "**salt of the earth**" and "**light of the world**". These **are** titles of honour, and of the greatest distinction. For **Christ** was the light of the world. **Christ** was the salt of the earth. And now he is putting his true disciples almost on a level with himself.

He it was, who gave us the true knowledge of the true nature of God, as shown by the incarnation. **He** it was, who gave our life its flavour, who gave our life its meaning, its preservation. By his death and resurrection, **he** took away the sting of death, and removed its eternal corruption by the guarantee and promise of a resurrection to an eternal life.

This **knowledge** we all know. And this knowledge we bring to all those who don't know it, **if** we **live** our lives daily and sincerely. The Christian who does this, is really another Christ, for he is continuing Christ's work of salvation during his years on earth. And **this** Christian is the **salt of the earth and light of the world**.

In true **humility**, we can all say that we are far from these honourable titles. Yet in all **sincerity**, many, if not the majority of us, are doing their little bit of Christ's work, in cultivating their own small corner of his vineyard.

The parents who teach their children the Christian way of life by word, and especially by example, are spreading the Christian faith. The worker whether in the office or factory, who show that they are Christians by their honesty and charity to those around them, and their respect for God and things of God, in their speech, are spreading their Christian faith. Also, all those who show moderation in their personal expenditures, and donate some of their savings to help their neighbours who are in need. These are true disciples of Christ, who are cooperating with Jesus, in bringing God's children back to their Father who is in heaven.

The Christian must not hide his **faith** and the true **knowledge** of God and his **love** for his neighbour, which he has **received** from God. It is not a gift for himself alone, but its effects must spread out to his neighbours, as the lamp's light spreads out around the room, lighting up the dark. It is through their truly Christian way of living, doing good to their neighbours as the beatitudes teaches us, and keeping the commandments of God, every day of their lives, that Christians, can **enlighten** their non-Christian neighbours.

However, if the salt has lost its flavour, and the light is kept under the basket, the Christian who behaves like **this**, can change his attitude, **provided** he is aided by God's grace, a grace which God never refuses. The Christian **can** become once more, what he ought to be, a life preserver for his neighbour.

Life on earth is short. The demands of our Christian life may not always be easy, but we know that if we live up to these demands, we are, **other Christs**. For we are continuing Christ's great work by our own good example to our neighbours, and we are giving glory to God, and earning for ourselves, the eternal light of heaven. Therefore, let us live up to the titles of honour that Christ has given us, **Salt of the earth** and **Light of the world**.