

5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

“You Are the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World”

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus tells His disciples, “You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.” He does not say, you might become, or you should try to be. He speaks in the present tense. This is not a compliment—it is a calling. Jesus is telling us who we are before He tells us what to do. He gives us an identity first, and then He calls us to live it. And that matters, because true confidence—Catholic confidence—does not come from outside affirmation. It does not come from praise, approval, popularity, success, or the opinions of others, nor is it found in trying to prove ourselves. Catholic confidence comes from living out faithfully who God has already made us to be. In Baptism, we were given a new identity. We became children of God, members of Christ’s Body, temples of the Holy Spirit. This is not something we earn; it is something we receive. Salt does not need to convince itself to be salty. Light does not need to struggle in order to shine. They live according to what they are—and they do what they were created to do.

Yet many of us hesitate to live this identity. We may wait until we feel ready. We may wait for clarity, confidence, or certainty. But faith does not work that way. Faith does not mean having no doubt at all. Faith means trusting God enough to act, even when doubt is still present in our lives. Scripture never presents faith as passive. Faith moves. Faith obeys. Faith steps forward, relying not on its own strength, but on God’s faithfulness. This is why St. James tells us that faith without works is dead—not because God needs proof, but because living faith, our faith, naturally bears fruit if lived well. Works do not replace faith; they reveal it. If salt never seasons, it becomes useless. If light is hidden, it fails its purpose. In the same way, faith that never shapes our choices, our habits, or the way we treat others has not yet fully taken root in our lives.

The Lord does not ask us to feel confident; He asks us simply to trust Him. He does not ask us to see the entire path ahead; He asks us only to take the next step. And over time, that obedience changes us. It strengthens trust. It forms us into credible witnesses to the Gospel. This is how the world comes to see Christ—not through perfect certainty or flawless lives, but through faithful lives. When we live the Gospel in real and concrete ways—when we forgive, endure, serve, and choose holiness—our lives begin to shine. Like salt that brings out flavor and light that drives back darkness, our faith becomes visible to others and effective in the world.

And that is the point. Jesus says, “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” Salt and light never exist for themselves. They exist for the good of others—which is the definition of love: willing the good of the other—and for the glory of God. So today, we are reminded: we do not invent our identity—we receive it. We do not wait for faith to feel safe—we live it. And when we do, the world encounters not us alone, but the living Christ working through each one of us. Be salt and light to the world, to change and inspire and bring the world to God.