

# The Paper Pulpit

*(Reflections from the Pastor)*

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Scripture:** *[Jesus said:] "You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven. Jesus says we are to be the salt of the earth. Matthew 5:14,16*

Here is a cute little story. A guest was asked to give a toast at a friend's wedding. At the reception, as the glasses were raised, the guest presented the couple with a beautifully decorated gift box. Inside the box was salt - common table salt. The guest then offered this toast to the couple: It's hard to keep a house without salt. It adds flavor and taste to just about every dish. But if you run out of toothpaste, you can brush with a mixture of soda and salt because of salt's cleansing qualities. If you develop a sore throat, you can gargle with salt because of its healing properties. If you're hungry, you can cure a ham or other meat with salt because of its preserving qualities. You can use salt to melt the ice that builds up in the winter cold. Salt can also be used to put out fires that flare up.

So, if you'll bring to the marriage the qualities found in salt - the cleansing quality, the healing quality, the preserving quality - you can use it to enhance the flavor of your life together, to melt the ice that will build up and put out the fires that will occasionally flare up between you. And, of course, if you take everything with a grain of salt, you will have a long and happy life together.

Here's another thought. Historians today consider Abraham Lincoln to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, president of this country. However, that greatness was not evident to all during his lifetime. Lincoln received a large amount of bitter, and often contradictory, criticism. To his critics, Lincoln told a story about a traveler who got caught in a terrible thunderstorm. The night was totally dark and the flashes of lightning provided the only clues to the path. One bolt struck quite close and the crash of thunder brought the man down to his knees. He was not a praying man, but he made a short petition, "Oh Lord! If it's all the same to you, give me a little more light and little less noise."

All of us can identify with that prayer. We live in a world of a lot of noise. It can sometimes confuse and disorient us. What we need is less noise and a bit more light. Jesus calls us to allow God's light to enter our hearts. As we pray for God's light, we ask that we might in some way become vehicles of that light to others. It is fairly easy to make noise, but a lot harder to give light. It requires restraint, timing, discipline - above all, asking the Lord to help us say the right word at the correct moment.

I am not talking about being brilliant - most of us are not. What counts is being steady and thoughtful. A lightning flash gives off enormous energy - and noise - but it lasts only a few seconds. What if all that energy could be harnessed? Scientists at General Electric once calculated that a single bolt of lightning has enough voltage to light a home for 35 years. Jesus tells his disciples, "You are the light of the world." Let us ask Jesus that we might give off less noise - and more light.

Jesus said we are to be light and salt to the world. Light and salt are meant to be shared. Have you shared your faith with someone recently?

**Diocesan Annual Appeal:** Thank you to those who already made their pledge. There is no pledge too big or too small. Our parish goal is just shy of \$22,000. We have pledged nearly \$16,000 and already collected nearly \$14,000. So we are just over \$8,000 short of our goal in dollars paid. In order to help us make our goal, three donors will pay up to a total of \$4,500 if they are matched by new dollars received from now until the end of March. So \$50 becomes \$100, \$100 becomes \$200, \$500 becomes \$1,000 and so on up to a combined total of \$9,000, which will put us over our goal. But we need everyone's help.

The key is to have everyone pledge. For those who have never pledged before there has never been a better time. I am really encouraging new/first time givers. If you can only afford \$20 that will become \$40. A \$50 donation will become \$100. For those who already made a pledge and want to take advantage of this offer, why not do so right now. All new dollars will be matched up to \$4,500. When we go over our goal, 100% of the money comes back to the parish. Please contact me directly if you have any questions or would like to make an additional pledge. It would be greatly appreciated. Additional pledge cards are available in the parish office. Don't wait.

*Sincerely in Christ, Fr. Jim Trempe*