

Homily 5th Sunday Year A 2023

Jesus calls us Salt and Light and asks us to act accordingly, not hide away in some misunderstood form of humility. Nelson Mandela says that *false humility* hurts us just as much as *false pride*. He said "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light not our darkness that frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are born to manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us. It's in everyone, and, as we let our light shine, we consciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

God made us people with a Salt that enlivens, adds value, brings out the goodness of others. This salt is the power of the Holy Spirit. So too is the light, it is the light of Jesus we received in a special way in baptism. We need to let the light within us shine and we need to be salt to all those we encounter. The following story helps illustrate this:

Sailing by a remote island one day, the bishop determined to use the time profitably. He strolled along the seashore and came across three fishermen attending their nets. In Pidgin English they announced that centuries before they had been Christianised by missionaries. "We, Christians!" they said, proudly pointing to one another.

Asking them if they knew the Lord's Prayer? They said they had never heard of it.

So, the Bishop asked them what they said when they prayed.

"We lift eyes to heaven. We pray, 'We are three, you are three, have mercy on us.'" The bishop was appalled at the primitive and heretical nature of the prayer. So, he spent the whole day teaching them the Lord's Prayer. The fishermen were poor learners, but they gave it all they had and, before the bishop sailed away next day, he heard them repeat the words faultlessly.

Months later the bishop was passing by those islands again and the bishop recalled with pleasure the three men who were now able to pray, thanks to his patient efforts.

Suddenly he saw a spot of light in the east that kept approaching the ship and, as he gazed in wonder, he saw three figures walking on the water. The captain stopped the boat and everyone leaned over the rails to see this sight.

It was the three fishermen. "Bishop," they exclaimed, "We hear your boat go past and come hurry-hurry meet you."

"What is it you want?" asked the awe-stricken bishop.

"Bishop," they said, "We so, so sorry. We forget lovely prayer. We say: Our Father in heaven, holy be your name, your kingdom come... then we forget. Tell us prayer again."

The chastened bishop replied, "Go back to your homes, my friends, and each time you pray, say, "We are three, you are three, and have mercy on us!"

Did you hear about the chap who was addicted to eating salt? Don't worry, he was cured.

I always take life with a pinch of salt... plus, a slice of lemon and a shot of tequila.

I got knocked off my bike by a salt spreading truck last winter.

"You IDIOT" I shouted through gritted teeth.