

02/09/14 5 A

-- *You are the salt of the earth*: When we hear Jesus' words during this rough winter we're having, our minds probably turn to the salt trucks out on the roads trying to make them drivable. It's been a pretty tough winter.

-- Supplies of salt are being strained by this winter's snow and ice. But, in Jesus' day and place, salt was always in fairly short supply. Yet it was vital. Salt was used as a conductor of heat in their ovens, in addition to being a seasoning and a preservative.

-- People carefully guarded their supplies of salt. Just like light, salt was essential to sustain life in their culture.

-- When Jesus speaks these words, he is addressing his disciples and all who are following him at the time. Notice he doesn't say, *You should be the salt of the earth*, but *You ARE the salt of the earth... the light of the world*.

-- By reason of our baptism we, too, are salt of the earth and light for the world. We are chosen by God to do his work. We are signs of his presence in the world.

-- Jesus is simply telling them...and us...to become what we are: people who radiate his presence in our everyday lives. God has given us this gift, this grace. We are to share it.

-- In fact, that is being done all the time by Christians in communities all around us. One well-known homiletics professor suggested that pastors/churches start a "salt and light" log.

-- This log would provide space (e.g., on a congregation's website) for people to write in ways that they or other church members had lived their faith and shown Christ's love at school, work, etc.

-- When I read this, I thought of something equivalent we already have at St. Caspar's. If you walk into the hall right behind me, you'll notice a bulletin board with pictures on it. I'm sure many of you have seen it.

- This board contains pictures of parishioners, taken from our local newspapers. Many of them show our parishioners engaged in activities and organizations that make them salt of our earth and light in our world.
- Of course, those pictures only scratch the surface. Others don't make the papers with their works of service to people in our communities.
- Our Knights of Columbus and St. Vincent de Paul Societies serve those in need on a continuing basis in a significant way, and many other individuals and groups perform great service every day.
- Perhaps we need to acknowledge these instances of salt and light more often. I'm sure we need to encourage one another in our efforts, which we may feel are small but touch people just the same.
- True wisdom comes in building up and encouraging one another, not in trying to one-up each other. That is a lesson the Christian community at Corinth was having a hard time getting into their heads. Paul had to correct them.
- This week, perhaps each of us could think of one way we have been salt or light to someone in our lives, and resolve to keep doing this.
- And we could also compliment a fellow Christian for one of his or her efforts to do the same thing.
- For, the more we really believe that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, the more we become those very things.
- And, in doing so, we become who we really are...just as Jesus would have us do.