



SUNDAY 8TH FEBRUARY, 2026.

5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

Reflection on the Gospel - Matthew 5:13-16

Called to "Season" the Earth Community

In today's Gospel, Jesus addresses two short parables to his disciples in the presence of the crowds. Parables were intended to tease their hearers, inviting them to see things from a new perspective, to see themselves in a new light. Jesus told these parables in early first century Palestine with its particular symbol system, while we hear them through the multiple layers of our own twenty-first century contexts and symbol systems. "Salt" and "light" have slightly different resonances in different contexts, as do "earth" and "world". Exploring those resonances or nuances can bring us to a deeper appreciation of the text.

This short reflection allows for a focus only on "the salt of the earth" parable or metaphor. For Jesus' Palestinian audience, salt was used to preserve and to season food. It also functioned as a cleansing or purifying agent. It could only lose its savour if contaminated by additives. We can resonate with all of that.

For some of the Jewish rabbis, salt signified wisdom: a "salted" disciple was a "wise" disciple. In some parts of the ancient world, as in Pakistan today, salt was used in dyeing processes as a way of intensifying as well as preserving the colour of fabrics. Many Westerners are not aware of this practice. These days we are rightly concerned about high levels of salinity in overworked soil. That was certainly not so for first-century Palestinians.

When we declare someone to be "salt of the earth", we are generally referring to the sheer goodness of the person in question, her/his down to earth reliability, lack of pretentiousness and practical wisdom. To be salt of the earth is to season the earth community, to intensify its beauty, to be wise in one's

judgments, to be just and compassionate in all of one's dealings. This parable, with its multi-layered symbolism, certainly teases the mind.

In the original Greek, the emphasis is on the first word in the sentence. Jesus is telling his hearers, disciples and crowds, that *they* are the salt of the earth. They do not have to *become* the salt of the earth; they *are* the salt of the earth. In short, he is affirming their worth. In its literary context, that assertion contrasts Jesus' followers with those who might persecute them. It affirms their capacity to stand strong in the face of opposition, "for the sake of justice". If they allow their commitment to be shaken, then the "salt" will be contaminated and the "earth" cannot be seasoned.

As we reflect on the diverse metaphorical applications of salt and earth, we might take a moment to give thanks to God for the gift of the material realities that underlie these powerful metaphors. This as I celebrate sixty-three years of consecrated Mercy living, I give thanks for the wonders of our planetary home and for all who have shown me what it means to be salt of the earth and light of the world.

By Sr. Veronica Lawson, RSM

DEATHS & ANNIVERSARIES

We pray for those who have
died recently
and for all whose anniversaries
occur at this time.
May they rest in peace.

First Reading: Isaiah 58:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord: Share your bread with the hungry,
and shelter the homeless poor,
clothe the man you see to be naked
and turn not from your own kin.
Then your light will shine like the dawn
and your wound be quickly healed over.
Your integrity will go before you
and the glory of the Lord behind you.
Cry, and the Lord will answer;
call, and he will say, 'I am here.'
If you do away with the yoke,
the clenched fist, the wicked word,
if you give your bread to the hungry,
and relief to the oppressed,
your light will rise in the darkness,
and your shadows become like noon.

The Word of the Lord. (R.) Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 111:4-9. R. v. 4

(R.) A light rises in the darkness for the upright.

1. He is light in the darkness for the upright:
he is generous, merciful and just.
The good man takes pity and lends,
he conducts his affairs with honour. **(R.)**
2. The just man will never waver:
he will be remembered for ever.
He has no fear of evil news;
with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord. **(R.)**
3. With a steadfast heart he will not fear;
open-handed, he gives to the poor;
his justice stands firm for ever.
His head will be raised in glory. **(R.)**

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

When I came to you, brothers, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed. During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God.

The Word of the Lord. (R.) Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation: John 8:12

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the light of the world, says the Lord; the man who follows me will have the light of life. **Alleluia!**

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.
'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

(R.) Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
He came down from heaven,
(All bow)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Communion Antiphon: Psalm 106:8-9

Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, his wonders
for the children of men, for he satisfies the thirsty
soul, and the hungry he fills with good things.

LOURDES DAY MASS

Saturday 14 February 2026 from 10.30am – 11.30am
at St. Patrick's Cathedral with Archbishop Peter A
Comensoli as the principal celebrant. The Mass is an
opportunity to pray for the sick and infirm,
particularly those who are unable to visit Lourdes.

PARISH PASTORAL VISITATION
BY BISHOP MARTIN ASHE

- Bishop Martin Ashe will visit the Parishes of Yarraville and Kingsville from **Friday 13 February – Sunday 15 February**.
- **On Friday 13th** he will visit the three schools in the morning, meeting with the Principal, Staff and students.
- In the afternoon of Friday the Bishop will meet with the Parish Staff, tour the building sites and meet with committees.
- **On Saturday 14th**, everyone is encouraged to join Bishop Martin at the Parish Forum at 10.00am at Corpus Christi, following 9.30am Mass, which he will lead.
- Bishop Martin will celebrate 5pm Vigil Mass at St. Augustine's and meet parishioners after Mass.
- **On Sunday 15th February**, Bishop Martin will celebrate 8am Mass at Annunciation, 9.30am Mass at St. Augustine's 11am Mass at Corpus Christi and The Bishop will call into the 11.30am Polish Mass at St. Augustine's.
- There will be 'A Cup' and an opportunity for parishioners to meet and talk to Bishop Martin after each of the Masses next weekend.
- Parishioners, please bring a plate to share, at the Mass you will be attending.
Please make Bishop Martin welcome.

PARISH PRIEST: Rev. Fr. Werner Utri

PARISH SECRETARY: Emilia Balkan

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ST. AUGUSTINE'S OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays: 9.30am -2.30pm

WEBSITE: www.melbcatholic.org/yarraville

SAFEGUARDING: Pat Mc Laughlin

MASS TIMES

TUESDAY: St Augustine's....6.00 pm
Exposition: 5.30 –6.00pm

WEDNESDAY: Corpus Christi.....9.15 am

THURSDAY: St Augustine's...9.15 am

FRIDAY: Corpus Christi....9.15 am

SATURDAY: Corpus Christi....9.30 am

SATURDAY VIGIL: St Augustine's...5.00 pm

SUNDAY: Annunciation.....8.00 am

St Augustine's....9.30 am

Corpus Christi..11.00 am

St Augustine's..11.30 am (Polish)

RECONCILIATION: SATURDAYS

after 9.30am Mass at Corpus Christi
St. Augustine's.....4.15pm

ROSTER FOR THIS WEEK: (7th & 8th Feb 2026)

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time A

READERS: St. Augustine's

5.00pm Rose Thomas

9.30am Pina Guzzardi, Anna Messina

COUNTING:.....Phillip Marques

READERS: Corpus Christi

11.00am Natasha Fernandes, Imelda Gibson

MINISTERS: St. Augustine's

5.00pm.....Joseph de Bono

9.30am.....Phillip Marques

MINISTER: Corpus Christi

11.00am.....Julianna Barr

ROSTER FOR NEXT WEEK: (14th & 15th Feb 2026)

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time A

READERS: St. Augustine's

5.00pm Krystyna Biront

9.30am Andrea Wilberger, Sam Polzella

COUNTING:.....Krystyna Biront

READERS: Corpus Christi

11.00am Cass Pelino, AJ Pelino

MINISTERS: St. Augustine's

5.00pm.....Joseph de Bono

9.30am.....Pina Guzzardi

MINISTER: Corpus Christi

11.00am.....Hong Nguyen

TAKE THE WAY OF THE GOSPEL PARISH RENEWAL

In last week's bulletin, we provided you with some information about the *Take the Way of the Gospel Parish Renewal* initiative that is part of the Melbourne Archdiocesan plan for Parishes. This week, we want to give you some further information about what it means for our Parish communities.

We have been asked to work more closely together across our Parishes to ensure our communities are Vibrant, Vital and Viable communities of faith. To do this, over the coming months, we will engage in a process to amalgamate our two Parishes, with its three distinct communities, into one Parish.

By becoming one Parish, we will formalise the cooperation and collaboration that already exists. Through prayerful listening to the Holy Spirit and each other, we will discover new ways to ensure our future as communities of faith together.

THE RENEWAL PROCESS

During Lent, there will be opportunities for us to gather in groups to listen to each other as we share the stories of our Parish communities:

- **Who we have been –**
sharing the rich history of our faith communities and our connection to them.
- **Who we are –**
sharing about what's working currently to support us in faith and community life.
What do we want to hold on to or continue? What could we let go of?

Then after Easter, we will take time to discover **Who we can become.**

In this phase we'll share our hopes and dreams for our faith community for the future, discern how we will nourish and express our faith, how we will form leadership to support us as a Vibrant, Vital Parish and what structures we need to be a Viable Parish.

We will share more about this in following weeks.

TRANSITION TEAM

Fr Werner has invited a number of people to assist our communities in planning this process of renewal and amalgamation.

The Transition Team, made up of parishioners from each of the existing communities is:

Fr Werner, Kath Baker, Julianna Barr, Greg Buhagiar, Mary Huynh, Aileen Martin, Jess Pang, John Ryan and Carmel Crawford (facilitator)

PARISHIONER INVOLVEMENT

In the coming weeks we will send out the dates for the gatherings. You are welcome to attend any one of the gatherings that suits you.

In the meantime please

Pray that we will be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit

Get to know and listen to others in your community.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have questions or concerns please contact one of the Transition Team members.