

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 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

Mt 5:13-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

You are the light of the world.

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.



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Breaking Open the Word

SALT AND LIGHT

Today's Gospel continues with Matthew's teaching in the 'Sermon on the Mount'. After identifying the disciples' blessedness in all kinds of situations with which the Gospel audience would be familiar, Matthew now highlights two images with which they can identify: salt and light. 'You are the salt of the earth' (5:13) and 'You are the light of the world' (5:14).

In Matthew's world salt was an important commodity and valuable trading product. It was used in cooking and for preserving foods (meat and fish) before refrigeration. Salt was shipped across the Mediterranean Sea and then carted into all of Rome's provinces along specially built salt roads. Salt's need was universal and, in times of scarcity, so precious that it became a means of bartering and currency substitute, hence the modern term 'salary'. But there is one quality of salt scarcely known. In a world of outdoor ovens with little or no wood to fire them, salt was mixed with dung to produce the chemical reaction that created the necessary heat required for baking bread.

In Jesus' reminder to the disciples that they are the 'salt of the earth', he is speaking more than about them being agents of preservation. Their presence in the Greco-Roman world meant at times that they will find themselves in disagreeable situations. These times requires fidelity or 'saltiness'. Their capacity to engage their world will also make them the 'light of the world'. The richness of these two metaphors, salt and light, finds their realisation with us, Jesus' contemporary disciples.

Fr Michael Trainor

THE SAVING WORD

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

8 FEBRUARY 2026

FIRST READING

Isa 58:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Your light will shine like the dawn.

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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

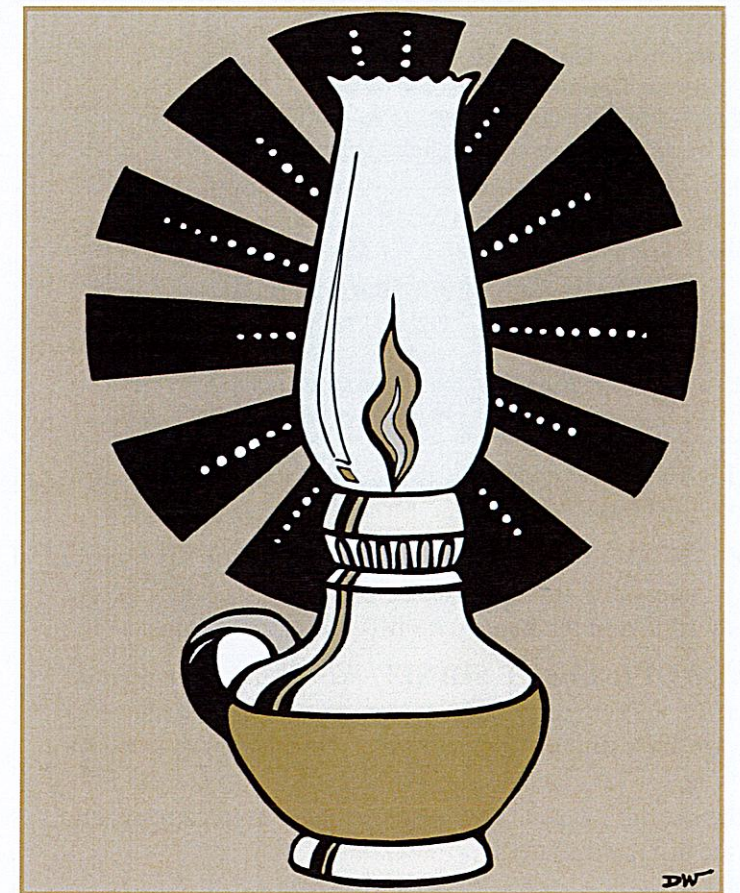
Ps 111:4-9. R. v. 4

R. A light rises in the darkness for the upright. (or **Alleluia!**)

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 Cor 2:1-5

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

I came to you to proclaim Christ crucified.

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.

Thus says the Lord:
Share your bread with the hungry,
and shelter the homeless poor . . .