



60th Year

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THE SPIRITUAL SALT

The salt of the earth

Today's Gospel passage comes from the Lord's Sermon on the Mount. In this homily the Lord is addressing the Apostles, and a large multitude of people is listening to Him. He is preparing the Apostles to spread the Gospel to all the nations. He sets out with the beatitudes with which He shows them which virtues must adorn them, and prophecies that they will be persecuted and disapproved by many people. They must not get discouraged however, because they are performing a work similar to the Prophets, who also were persecuted for the word of God.

In relation furthermore to the Prophets, the Apostles are performing a much more important work, because the Prophets were sent only to the land of Palestine to the people of the Jews, whereas they are being sent out to all the universe, to preach to all nations. They are the salt of the earth. This phrase of Christ reveals the truth that all people had become deadened a long time before and had rotted. Now, however the Apostles are being sent out to the world. They are not being sent out to enliven the world. He who again granted life to the world is Christ, who was crucified and resurrected for the sake of all people. The Apostles are being sent as spiritual salt of humanity, to preserve the new life, which it received from Christ. With their holy life and their preaching they showed people the way, in which they will be preserved in the true and living faith and will be delivered from the rottenness of sin.

A similar work with that of the Apostles, faithful Christians are performing throughout all ages. The believers, and par excellence the Saints of the Church, comprise the salt of the earth. Thanks to them, the world is preserved from destruction. They make humanity tasty and give meaning to its existence with the Grace of God which indwells in them and through them is poured out to the whole pan human body. The Fathers of the Church, both ancient and contemporary, confess and write that the more holy people are lessened—the people who are bearers of the Holy Spirit—all the more the

people are handed over to corruption and are in danger of being destroyed through the tearing apart of one another by hate, division and greed.

So this is the most important mission of every Christian. To preserve himself spiritually alive with the correct faith and the keeping of the commandments of Christ, so that life is imparted to the whole world. When among Christians, faith is lessened and their life becomes lukewarm, then the whole world is harmed.

Because, furthermore the life of believers is a constant censuring for the unbelievers and the indolent, people don't mock and trample upon anyone else, as much as the Christian whose life proves contrary to his words. They cast upon them all their antipathy, which is piled up inside them on account of their censuring teaching of the Gospel as regards their sinful life. Consequently, as Christians that we are, the ugly words and the various persecutions from people should not scare us, because these make us similar to the Apostles of the Lord and the Prophets of God. That which should startle us is that we lose the salt of divine grace, due to our sins and our weak faith, because then we become cause for the name of our Lord God Jesus Christ to be blasphemed.

The light of the world

The Lord also calls the Apostles, light of the world. Even though when He was telling them these things, He was with them in a small corner of the earth, nevertheless, as God that He is, he knew well the world-saving work which they would perform spreading the preaching of the Gospel to the ends of the universe. So for this reason also, He demands from them so much courage and such precision in the virtuous life, so that they preserve inside them, unquenched and very flourishing, the light which he lit with his delivering work upon the earth and the mission of the fiery Holy Spirit.

These words of our Lord apply to all believers. The Christians are the light of the world and they resemble a city which is upon a mountain and shows to everyone. We have a command from the Lord to shine so much with our virtuous life, so that other people return from the deception of sin and glorify the true God. When we have so much grace and virtue, as the Lord demands from us, it is impossible for us to escape the notice of others, no matter how much we hide, as it would be impossible for someone to hide, if he were dressed with the rays of the sun.

This, however also means that it is impossible for a Christian to not reveal his faith. The preaching of the Gospel with works and with words is among the first and main commandments which we received from the Lord. The Apostles were not persecuted because they believed in Christ, but because they were preaching Christ. So let us not cower to confess and preach our faith, even in the if laws ever come out which forbid it to us, remembering the words of the Apostles, that we should obey God more than people.

Archim. P. K.