



Thoughts on the Journey

February 5, 2023 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matthew 5:13-16

Suanne Gettings

At one time or another, we have all probably heard, "Yes. I'm a Christian, but my faith is private." We may have even said it ourselves. The essence of that reasoning goes something like, "I am a Christian, but I don't want anyone to notice." Reflecting on the gospel from Matthew this week, I couldn't help but wonder, what Jesus would say about that kind of thinking.

Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount on the northern slope of the Sea of Galilee. It was there He made it clear what His expectations were for those who truly wanted to be His devoted followers. He said to His Disciples as He says to us,

**"You are the salt of the earth...
you are the light of the world"**

Jesus' use of the words 'earth' and 'world' indicate that our Christian influence should impact the world globally, beginning where we live: in our homes, at school, at work, in our communities, and beyond. Jesus calls us to live the beatitudes so that our Christian actions and reactions move outward and make a difference. Can salt go unnoticed when it seasons our food? Can light go unnoticed if it penetrates the darkness? Do we think that Jesus wants us to go quietly amid the noise of a broken secular world going unnoticed? Absolutely not and we know this by His God-given mandate to advance the gospel by how we live and love.

There are many examples of people who understand what it means to be salt and light. We have a community of people who glorify our Lord by living this mandate. There are many examples of faith in action, but here is just one for the sake of this article: Our El Salvador Ministry has been part of our parish outreach for many years. Their mission is to support the staff, the children, and their families of the PNAR

Catholic School in Agua Caliente, El Salvador, through prayer and resources. Many of our parishioners sponsor the students who otherwise would be unable to afford to attend the school. Sponsorship includes books, uniforms, tuition, a safe environment for learning, and much more.

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, Larry Savage, and a committee of dedicated people, we see the transforming nature of living Jesus' mandate to be salt of the earth and light to the world. Thru fortitude, persistence, good example, and fostering relationships with the school community, tremendous progress has been made over the years. Over 200 children are currently enrolled; that number has grown substantially and hopes to continue growing. A once dependent people are now taking ownership of their school. With the hard work of the school staff, in cooperation with students and their families, they are making it thrive bringing light to their community.

There are ongoing zoom meetings with people from our El Salvador Ministry and members of the school staff. People from our parish have made trips to El Salvador to bring resources and encouragement. It's inspiring to witness the incredible cooperation of everyone working together as a global community of faith... we, in Ohio and they, in El Salvador. These are disciples who are willing to be noticed for their service to others, not for their own glorification. As a result, people are witnessing the good that they do and giving glory to God. We are all called to be salt and light regardless of how old we are or what we do. It's a mindset that strengthens the flavor of what we believe so that others want to taste it. It brings light to the Christ within us illuminating the way so that others will follow.