

**Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - A' 2023**  
**Is. 58.7-10///1 Cor.2.1-5///Mt. 5.13-16**

→I am sure over the past 48 hours we have all adjusted our thermostats in our homes...the awakening cold on Friday...and today's mild temperatures most likely had us making some adjustment with our furnaces....

→coincidentally....one of the more memorable retreat experiences for me happened a few years back when during one of the talks the retreat master asked us this question...a question that I would like to ask you today as well

**"are you a thermometer or a thermostat?"**

→it's a rather odd question don't you think....but he asked us again... **"are you a thermometer or a thermostat?"** and then he made us each say out loud what we considered ourselves to be

→and after we had done so, he began his reflection by stating that when it comes to our faith, our belief in Jesus Christ, and our commitment to the Church some of us are thermometers while others are thermostats

→[now] what's the difference you might ask -----[well you see] a thermometer reflects its environment...it tells us what the temperature is...if its hot outside...it says its hot; if its cold, it says its cold....but it exerts no influence on what's around it, rather a thermometer is influenced solely by its surroundings

→but a thermostat is just the opposite...a thermostat has the power to change things...it sets the temperature and then changes things...turn up the thermostat up and it gets warm, turn it down and it gets cold....i.o.w..a thermostat makes things happen

so, again, as I was asked on retreat...I ask you.....what do you consider yourself to be...a thermometer or a thermostat?

→[and] what a great question that is...because it relates nicely to what Jesus tells his disciples in today's reading when he says:

→ *“you are the salt of the earth but if salt loses its taste how can it be restored...it is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled...you are the light of the world...a city built on a hill cannot be hidden, likewise no one lights a light and puts it under a bushel basket, but instead puts it on a stand so that light can be given to the whole house.”*

---... **“you are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world”**

---what an incredible opportunity and gift we have been given

→recall in the baptismal ceremony shortly after the person has been baptized they are presented with a candle and told... *“receive the light of Christ....this light is to burn brightly always in our heart and soul”*.

→and somehow...because of our decision to follow Jesus and his teachings

→we are now to be....the salt and the light....for the entire world!!!

PAUSE

→think for a moment about all of the people who have touched and influenced you the most in your life,

---the people who when they speak...they speak from their heart

---the people who because of their faith in God....inspire you to believe more in yourself and in your faith

→do they not light up your life? ....do they not bring a new taste and zest to you?

→do they not penetrate and change your lives with their care and concern and honesty?

..[much in the same way that the presence of Jesus changed the lives of Peter and James and John...and for that fact everyone he came in contact with?]

PAUSE

→and so God's presence within us is a light and the strength and depth of our faith is what allows the light to burn brightly...and gives taste to our salt

→and today....in this part of the Sermon on the Mount we are being challenged, to realize the importance of Christ, THE LIGHT, in our lives

→how that LIGHT is a part of us and we are a part of it

→the 1st reading from Isaiah tells us how we can, OR SHOULD be making our "light shine forth"

→the instructions are clear and direct....share with the hungry, shelter the homeless....clothe the naked....care for one another because by doing so, our light will shine forth like the dawn

→and in today's gospel Jesus says the very same thing to us ...by declaring we are the light and salt of the world

→and so the key here is to understand what it means to be LIGHT and SALT to one another

---i.o.w...to decide whether we are a "thermometer or a thermostat?"

→you know it doesn't take much to be a thermometer these days....but being a thermostat is a something completely different

→to be a thermometer all you have to do is go along with what everyone else says or does....tag along with the rest of the crowd....think and be concerned with your own comfort and ease and nothing else

→when others around you are scoffing and mocking others...just be quiet...and mind your own business...and not make any waves

→when someone is being narrow-minded or intolerant just be silent and say nothing

→when someone is hurt and alone, feeling offended or betrayed...simply walk on by.....

----[you see] all you have to do to be a thermometer is to go with the flow....don't speak up, give no witness, pay no attention...don't get involved

however to be salt for the earth, to be a light...means being the thermostat

→being someone who effects change in this world, in life, in our faith so that the message of Christ comes alive

→not being afraid for doing what is the right thing to do....

→we have been given the ability to give a new taste to life...to be a light for those who are still in darkness.

→[and] with determination and dedication we must continue to shine brightly for others and ourselves...to give new taste as we cope and maneuver through the ups and downs of our existence...

→or perhaps to put it simply...when it comes to faith, life, our commitment to Church and to one another we just need to answer that simple question I started with: are you.....a thermometer or a thermostat!