

“You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.” When you hear those words of Jesus, what comes to mind? In contemporary language, to call someone “salt of the earth” is to speak about their character—someone proven over time to be humble, reliable, honest, hardworking, not seeking attention or status. But when Jesus *first* spoke these words, they carried a very different weight. Two thousand years ago, salt was precious. It wasn’t a seasoning—it was essential because it preserved food, stopped decay, and kept what was **good** from going **bad**. So when Jesus says to his disciples, “*You are the salt of the earth,*” he’s saying: **you are the essential element that keeps society good, healthy, and wholesome.**

That got me thinking about what this might mean **here**. Within the geographical boundaries of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Parish live around **150,000 people**. Across our eight worshipping communities, we have roughly **1,200 regular worshippers**. That’s about **0.8%** of 150,000, or close enough to **1%**. Now here’s the fascinating part. The ideal amount of salt in most food—by percentage weight—is about **1%**. When I discovered that, it was as though Jesus was calling out to each one of us to **Go. Be visible Christians in this parish. Don’t hide your faith like a light under a tub, but be that essential element that makes society good, healthy and wholesome.** As about 1% of the population, **we** are perfectly placed to make, not a marginal, but a **significant** difference in the geographical parish. This is already happening in small ways, but it will grow as more of us truly understand and live out our identity as salt of the earth—but here’s the key: it’s an identity that’s **inseparable** from knowing the power of Holy Spirit in

our lives. That is exactly where St Paul takes us in the second reading.

Paul is crystal clear: it's not about him. It's about the Spirit. "**I came**," he says, "with a demonstration of the power of the Spirit, so that your faith might **not** depend on anything human, but on the power of God." That statement asks a confronting question of each of us: **What is the foundation of my faith?** Is it built primarily on ideas I've accepted as true? On what I learnt by rote at school? On what I inherited from my parents? On faithful obedience—coming to Mass every week because that's what Catholics do? **Or** is my faith grounded, as Paul says, in **demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit?**

Paul is referring to three things regarding the power of Holy Spirit: **First**, the **inner conviction** given by the Spirit—that is, the lived experience of Jesus' presence and personhood. **Second**, **manifestations of the Spirit**—healings, prophecy, and the gifts of tongues, for example. And **third**, **transformed lives**—changed character, renewed relationships, communities reshaped in unity and love. By challenging his readers and leading them toward Christian maturity, Paul doesn't just **talk** about being salt—he *lives* it. He embodies what Jesus gives his disciples as their new identity: "*You are the salt of the earth.*"

In our parish, *being salt* often looks like ministry—people serving in ways that actively accompany others toward an encounter with Jesus. It might be someone who prays deeply so they can proclaim the Word with power. It might be someone who welcomes at the door with the warmth and love of Christ. It might be someone who resists the urge to rush off after Mass, choosing instead to stay,

share hospitality, and offer the simple gift of their presence to others. But what does it mean to turn *outward*, beyond these walls and be salt for the **rest of the people** who live in this part of the world?

On paper, it sounds unrealistic. It would mean each of the 1,200 accompanying about 125 people! And yet—imagine what our parish would look like, sound like, and *feel* like if our faith ***grew*** to be truly built on demonstrations of Holy Spirit’s power. That is precisely the vision we are deliberately stepping into. It’s why post-Mass prayer ministry is now available after every Sunday Mass. It’s why we’re launching Connect Groups. And it’s why, following the homily, I will be commissioning – or rather, it’s Holy Spirit who will commission _____, the Pastoral Leader of this community, and her leadership team. (9.30am only - ***Following them, Holy Spirit will also commission my Senior Leadership Team***). Commissioning leaders is not about titles or hierarchy, it’s about laying foundations so that our faith might depend not on anything human, but on the living, risen presence of Jesus, made visible, knowable, tangible, by the power of Holy Spirit. “You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.” May we come to embrace this identity profoundly and live it boldly— **becoming the essential element that makes our entire parish good, healthy, and wholesome.** Amen.