

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

09 June 2020

First a few things you should know:

- As you have probably heard, the Province of Ontario is allowing Houses of Worship to open at thirty percent capacity on Saturday, June 13. This means Mass will be celebrated this weekend at Holy Rosary Parish. Bishop Bergie will be having a meeting at the Catholic Center tomorrow to determine the Diocesan guidelines for parishes. Once this document is sent to us I will be having a staff meeting to determine how the guidelines will be implemented here. Since there is much work to do before Saturday, no decisions about Confirmation, First Communion or future Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms will be made until next week. Eucharistic Adoration is likely going to resume next week. I will communicate through this website with the parish about final details about the reopening of the Parish later this week.

Salt is something we take for granted. You can buy a box of it at the corner store for only a few bucks. We spread it on our sidewalks to break up the ice. It is an ingredient in almost every processed food. However, there was a time when it was a valuable commodity. It was necessary for the preservation of food. It was sometimes used to pay people (the origin of the word salary). Since salt was mined, it was expensive to obtain. Throughout history, salt was valued not simply because it kept food from spoiling but added flavour to it.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples "You are the salt of the earth". Although today this term refers to simple and good individuals, Jesus probably used it to teach his disciples what kind of people they are called to be. The Gospel they preached was supposed to be "good news". The world in which they lived was not a pleasant place. The Romans ruled with an iron fist and taxed the people heavily. While a small elite was wealthy, most people had little income and no security. The religious establishment was frequently corrupt and sided with the Romans. There was good reason for most Jews to believe God had forgotten them. What many of them needed was a sense of hope and joy. Christ's teachings attempted to instill that in them. His healings and miracles tried to give concrete expression to his message. The disciples were called to spread this hope and joy not just with words but their lived experience. By their example, others would learn how God had not abandoned them and trusting in him would give them the strength and wisdom to overcome the difficulties they confronted. As the salt of the earth, disciples would enable them to taste the true flavour of life.

Catholics and other people of faith are called upon to show how their faith has made their lives different. Doing so involves more than talking about their beliefs and following its spiritual and moral disciplines. The key factor is the way in which this is done. While it is impossible for any believer to maintain a high level of enthusiasm for their faith all the time, it is important for him or her to reconnect with the energy which comes from a close relationship with God. Without this energy there is nothing which distinguishes believers from the rest of the population. Faith which becomes apathetic loses its taste and like impure salt is worthless and thrown away. When it is dynamic, it leads others to ask why believers are full of life and be open to God's message.

During our present crisis, many individuals are looking for a sense of hope and joy. A lot of people are tired of social isolation and want things to return to normal. They are worried about their economic future. The scourge of racism has made certain groups fear those responsible for their safety. People of faith cannot magically make these problems go away. What they can do is listen to those who are frustrated, afraid and angry. When such people realize they are not alone, and working together can make things

better, the seeds of hope are planted. When the little signs of the good things occurring in their lives are pointed out to them, the seeds of joy are sown. It takes energy and discipline to care when it would be easier to turn away. Yet, such qualities should not be hard for disciples to find.

It only takes a little salt to give food flavour. It doesn't take a lot of energy for disciples to have a big impact on others either.