

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you O God, my strength and my joy... Amen...

Prior to going to Seminary, I was the General Manager at Red Eye Brewing Company... During my time there I became good friends with the current executive chef and I learned a great deal from him.

The way he works with flavor is fascinating and his dishes are absolutely delicious. I remember when he started and, in particular, I remember when he completely changed up our dessert menu.

Prior to him starting, Red Eye ordered most of their desserts through Cisco, which were delicious in their own way, but did not compare to his new house made desserts...

I remember the first time encountering one such dessert and watched as he sprinkled maldon salt on top of it...

For those of you who are not familiar with maldon salt, it is an artisan sea salt, that is used as a finishing touch, because of its large pyramid shaped flakes, enhancing dishes in a unique way.

Now you don't need a lot, just a little sprinkle...

Because if you have ever had anything with too much salt on it, it is not so pleasant...

For example, another time at Red Eye I had the house made veggie burger...

The second I bit into it; all I could taste was salt... After drinking a decent amount of water, I let the chef know that something went wrong...

After some digging, he discovered that the person who sautéed the veggies for the patty had added salt, then someone else formed the patties and they also added salt, then someone else cooked my patty, and they also added salt...Accumulating to a salt infused veggie burger...

And for us Midwesterners, talking about salt this time of year can also bring to mind some not so pleasant images...

Salt covered roadways and cars... Salt that gets tracked across floors, and smeared across our jackets... Exposing things that we might not want to see, and giving us the extra job of vacuuming and mopping.

Showing that salt can be good, while it can also be overwhelming and exposing, unveiling messes that need to be cleaned up, or if you are a chef some investigating...

And salt of course, is something that makes us thirsty...

And today we heard about another image of salt... As we heard Jesus say, you are the salt of the earth... Followed by a warning, that we are not to let our salt flavor get destroyed... Because when salt loses its taste, it is no longer good for anything.

Because salt is important for the element that it is... It brings flavor, it preserves food, and it keeps us from slipping on the ice...

It has its unique purpose, and place...

And each of you have a unique purpose and place... You each bring your own flavor to life...

And as disciples of God, we are called in many different ways like salt. Because each situation you encounter is unique... And is in need of your uniqueness.

For example, sometimes you might be called to share your flavor... To share the unique gifts that God bestowed upon you...

Sometimes you might be called to bring about thirst... Sharing God's good news or God's love, so that people thirst for God...

Or you may go about this in subtle ways, by living a life that people are thirsty for, when they notice that you walk with a light.

Which brings us back to our gospel reading... When Jesus also said, you are the light of the world...

Such a beautiful image at first glance...

But light, like salt, can get into places that we may not want to go...

Like salt in a wound... Or light into the places we want to cover up, or ignore.

Places, however, that need to be brought to light...

Or wounds that need to be healed...

Showing again the importance of both salt and light, in the unpleasantness or in the uncomfortable situations in life.

As salt and light used in this way... Call us to action, to usher in a world where all people can thrive. Where all people are treated with dignity, respect, and kindness...

As being the salt of the earth and the light of the world entails both a beautiful blessing, and also a responsibility...

Showing that Jesus' words are deeper than at first light... And that life consists of layers of flavor...

Where people are uniquely called to bring to light God's justice, love, and peace...

And to do so boldly like salt, and radiantly like light.

Embracing your humanity while you do it... Because even if you do something and it turns out not to be the right move, or if you realize you made a mistake...

Know that God will forgive you, because God knows that you are trying...

It is practice, not perfection, that produces God's light.

Practice of embracing the fullness of what makes you, you... And living that out each day.

As this will cultivate your relationship with God... Where God's love will come through your every breath... Bringing life, light, and vitality to those around you...

And at times will be exhausting...

And when you are feeling exhausted from this work... or perhaps salty from life in general... Remember... You are not the only salt shaker or the only candlestick...

That you have this community to replenish your shaker.... And that together, with God, we can become a blazing fire that no basket can hide.

As St. Catherine of Siena said, "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire." ... Amen...