

### Salt and Light

How many people have demonstrated somehow that you can actually cook? Now how many of you actually like to cook? I know that I can cook, but the jury is still out as to whether or not I like to do it. If I have time, I like to do it. I can spread things out to time them, etc. Trust me, I feel for those of you who are responsible for providing meals—sometimes all three—each and every day.

Skipping the every day meals, if you were going to have company come for dinner what would be your go-to meal? Mine is stuffed roast pork, mashed potatoes, and peas. If you want homemade gravy with this meal, you had better hope that Mark is around because I am more likely to open a jar of gravy, put it in a pan, and hide the jar. I might add something from the pan in there to try to pull it off as homemade.

Over the past years I have improved on my cooking by adding a few more spices besides salt and pepper to my meal while cooking. I am slowly leaving my Irish spices behind and adding a variety of things to my meals. What I have learned, though, is that there is nothing wrong with salt and pepper. Of course, you must use these things in moderation.

As it is a natural resource, salt has been around for ages. It was used for various things but frequently as a preservative for food. Salt was used to preserve fish to be consumed at a later time. Remember there was no refrigeration. It was also used to mix mortar for construction for the Romans. Too much would result in uneatable food or the mortar not holding the construction together. If we are going to be the salt of the earth, we have to take care that we are also not too salty. The kids in school would sometimes tell me that I was being salty (which in their lingo means annoyed or upset about something.) I'd flash "the look" and say, "I'll give you "salty" now get to work!" We have salt down, but what about light?

Another precious commodity to the people in pre-electricity times was light. Light was very important because they had to depend on the sun or on oil lamps for light at night. Someone was always bound to get hurt if the light fell over and started a fire or burned someone. The evening was frightening as that would be the time when the enemy would attack or violent crimes take place. Because there was no electricity or lamps on the streets, even the big cities would be very dark.

It was because of this that people often shared what light they had. Jesus tells us that "you are the light of the world." So, what about our light? As we well know, light comes in many different ways. We have soft light, bright light, spotlights, lights of color, lights that blink, twinkle and sparkle. We have different ways of letting our light shine through our motives, actions, talents, interactions and all that we say and do.

Our churches are a light to the world as well. We have morphed from meeting houses of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century to where we are today. The thrift shops in both churches offer service to others. When we help to stock the shelves of Common Goods at Westfield State, Southwick Pantry, Westfield Food Pantry or when we feed those in need at the Community Table or a bowl of soup, we let our light shine.

The way in which we let our light shine has changed a great deal, particularly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many of us are on social media. As we have learned what this powerful tool can do, we have learned how our light can be shed in ways that show all of our wrinkles and faults. We must be mindful that we are not seen in that light.

My siblings in Christ, we are truly blessed that we are called here to worship today. We are invited by Christ to share in His word through the Sacred Scriptures as well as to break bread here at his table. We are welcome no matter how salty we might be or what color light we shine. Let us always strive to be the right amount of salt as well as the best possible light of the world.