

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community + Spirit of Christ Mission

Fifth Sunday Winter Ordinary time "A" ~ February 8, 2026

A VISION OF HOPE + A PROMISE OF LIFE + A SPIRIT OF SERVICE

Isaiah 58:7-10; Psalm 112: 4-5, 6-7, 8-9; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Matthew 5:13-16

Homily ~ Deacon Jim Kaney + Gary Weisbrich, Chair Capital Campaign

Today, in a moment, Gary Weisbrich will share with us his thoughts on this parish and our building project.

Surprised to see an empty seat at the Super Bowl stadium, a diehard fan remarked about it to the woman in the adjoining seat. "It was my husband's" the woman explained, "but he died." "I'm so sorry", said the man, "Yet I am really surprised that another relative or friend didn't jump at the chance to take the seat reserved for him." "Beats me," she shrugged. "They all insisted on going to the funeral."

It's a matter of what are our priorities. In our gospel we are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Our Lord was telling his disciples that they are to be the salt of the earth. To this day we interpret that phrase to mean those who are good, honest, humble, dependable people. Yet, like so many of his parables, this one has different levels of meaning to the people of his day. Yes, salt was used for seasoning and at the same time it was used to preserve those foods, especially meats and fish which could quickly spoil. It was valuable, very valuable and so are those who are the salt of the earth. That is each of us; as disciples we are sent into our worlds to keep them from decay, preserving their goodness and preventing them from becoming corrupted or ruined. There were times when Roman soldiers were actually paid in salt. Salt was also used in Jewish religious sacrifices with Moses detailing how to offer sacrifices. "You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering." Salt was a symbol of our Lord's covenant with them. As we are salt of the earth we offer ourselves in obedient self-sacrifice, we become the seasoning and preservative making it well-pleasing to God.

In our Lord's time salt was also used to destroy, there are many scriptural references to salt being used in judgement or destruction. In one of the fiercest judgement statements in the Gospels our Lord says in Mark "everyone will be salted with fire", punished, destroyed. Salt was also used to fertilize and could help the soil retain water, make fields easier to plow, kill weeds, protect from disease, and stimulate growth and increase harvests. We too are called to be salt of the earth to be in places where conditions are challenging and life is hard. Yes, our Lord is telling us we are salt of the earth and wants us to follow him in these complementary yet diverse ways – flavoring, preserving, sacrificing, destroying and fertilizing.

(I now invite Gary to share his thoughts on his experiences in this parish, this building, this family.)

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- **You are the light of the world. What does that really mean for me and for you within our church community?**
 1. Welcome and be Welcomed (Invitation)
 2. Give and Receive
 3. Sustains us on our Faith Journey
 - I. **How we are welcomed and how we welcome others.**
 - It was Sunday Oct. 12, 2013, Welcomed by Fr. Ed, MaryJo and all of you.
 - Remember that day so clearly-CLOW-Matthew- funny
 - How we are welcomed inspires us to welcome others in the same way.

- How will this sacred space be an environment that is welcoming and an investment in the future the Youth?
- Generous people came before us, we not only walk in their footsteps, but it is our responsibility to carry on this legacy of faith for the next generation.
- Youth need a sense of belonging, a sense of community. Participate Children's Liturgy, Ushering and Greeting, Eucharistic Minister, a lector, Youth Group, Legendary lodge camps. See the growth
 - Martin rarely with clothes on. Does it cost extra to take the cup?

- II. **Receiving and Giving:** Recognizing that everything we have and is a gift invites us to give back. Experiencing, taking in and receiving those meaningful and special moments that point to something greater.
- Marcus received the sacrament of baptism here in 2015, at this baptismal font (I think several others might even have been baptized unofficially when they almost fell in had it not been protected by the plants. We need a new font!!
 - All our children and many others received their first communion, first reconciliation and a sacrament of confirmation
 - The funeral liturgies connect us so closely with our loved ones.
 - November we remember & surrounded by our loved ones, our Sacred Space and the beautiful Shrine (Offerendi) constructed for El Dia de Los Muertos
 - Maria - Easter Vigil was; she loved the fire, would bring her blanket with her and her favorite song. "Horse and Chariot Cast into the Sea"
 - Social Center- Sharing of our faith and stories Examples:

Gala brunch, faith formation weekends, Our Lady Guadalupe

Spanish speaking parishioners, and community invited us into their sacred space

- III. Keep the Light on the lampstand burning? "In other words, how do we continue to share our faith day after day as we go out into the world..."
- We cannot give what we do not have. Therefore, having a place to come and be filled up- helps us in our faith journey. Having a worship area that draws us in touching all of our senses lifts our hearts and minds through beauty is vital.

In summary- Our sacred Space needs updating no different than our home.

Our worship area, our Social Center and our kitchen are those sacred spaces the help us welcome and feel welcomed, helps form us to be better receivers and hence more joyful and generous givers and it's what sustains us as we continue our faith journey.

Deacon Jim:

We are called to be the light to the world and to be the salt of the earth. As followers of our Lord that call has not been altered in 2000 years. Our new church project will help us to do so even more. Winston Churchill once wrote "We shape our dwellings and afterwards our dwellings shape us". We do that, have done that in our homes, where we live. We are doing that with this building, it will continue to better inspire us to be the light to the world, to be the salt of the earth.

Sacrosanctum Concilium, the first document to be approved at Vatican II is on the sacred liturgy. I first read that document, and the other 15 constitution, decree and declaration documents on AMTRAK rides to and from Chicago to spend time with my mother in January 2009. I learned much and underlined many statements – let me share two as we continue to shape our dwelling, this building and property. 'Ordinaries (Bishops)

are to take care that in encouraging and favoring sacred art, they should look for noble beauty rather than sumptuous display. The same thing applies to sacred vestments and ornaments." The second is "When churches are built, let great care be taken that they are suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and FOR THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE FAITHFUL." This parish does a very good job satisfying both statements and will do even better as we allow this building to shape us.

Let us continue to construct this space to inspire us in prayer and worship, to nourish us in our Lord's love and send us beyond these walls transformed, to become what we receive, to welcome the stranger, care for those in need, and see the face of our Lord in all people - to truly be the salt of the earth and the light for the world.

It is a matter of our priorities.



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A PROMISE of Life,
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