Now the football season is officially over and the baseball season has yet to begin, I can find myself channel surfing through the 1000 television stations I have on cable network as well at checking Netflix, Finally, finding nothing that matches my desire for a serious educational moment, I turn to an old standby rerun: *Everybody Loves Raymond*. I recall an episode where Marie serves her husband Frank a lasagna dinner. During the meal, Frank asks her to pass the salt. Marie is shocked and says, *in 47 years of marriage you never asked me to pass you the salt. You think my cooking never needs salt*? Frank insists it does and they end up screaming a shouting at each other.

Anytime my blood pressure was running a bit high my former doctor would tell me it was because I was eating too many salty pretzels. I would respond my blood pressure is high because I waited almost an hour and half in your waiting room and you still haven’t added any new magazines. I remember living with a priest who had sodium free soup every day. I asked him what it tasted like and he gave me a taste. . I could barely get through one tablespoon; it tasted horrible. Our bodies cannot live without salt, but too much salt can damage our health. Salt for centuries was a great preservative of meats before refrigeration. 50% of our chemicals depend heavily on salt. Without salt, it would be most difficult to drive on icy roads. We use the expression *he or she is the salt of the earth* as a compliment for a person; a person without much experience *needs some seasoning*; *to put salt in the wound* is an expression to cause added pain to another.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus uses this most basic ingredient to teach us about the living of the Gospel. He tells us: *You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything
but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot*.

What is does it mean to be salt of the earth? Well, we know salt gives life, health, and joy. Simply put, I adds flavor to our lives. So, I thought about an area where can choose to season the life of another, or put salt in their wounds and cause hurt. An area of life we might look at is that of how we use the gift of speech. Our words can lift up a person up and send them forth with joy, or our words can destructive and hurtful to another and bring them pain. Also, silence can be a great blessing or a curse. I can come to a meal and give the silent treatment to my family and make everyone feel on edge and wonder what they have done wrong. Why is Dad being so silent; why won’t my sister talk to me. I can be impatient with a clerk or someone on the phone and snap at them in anger. Any sentence that begins with *I know that I shouldn’t say this but* should stop with the conjunction but and go no further. I can say from experience that what is said next after that word but will not be the salt of the earth but the salt in the wound. Sometimes, challenging another person is something that must be done. But we must ask are we speaking in anger or in love when we correct someone. When I was a child growing up in Brooklyn, we had an expression that went like this: *sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.* We know that old saying is not true. Even though we try to erase certain words that were said to us about us forty of fifty years ago, they still hurt and it so is so very hard to let them go. Once, the hurtful words are out there, they are not so easily taken back. You cannot un-ring a bell.

A light sprinkle of salt can bring out the taste in food. When our Lord Jesus speaks about being the salt of the others, he is teaching us something so basic that we might tend to overlook it. How we live and act with others, especially those who are closest to us can have a great impact on their lives. Think about a person who salt for you, who seasoned your life. It may have been your parents, a friend, a teacher, a priest, an author, a musician, an unknown person on the other end of phone call, a stranger. I

In *its A Wonderful Life,"* Mary and George Bailey (Donna Reed and Jimmy Stewart) welcome the Martini family to their new home with three symbolic gifts and a brief, heartfelt speech. "*Bread, that this house may never know hunger," they say. "Salt, that life may always have flavor. And wine, that joy and prosperity may reign forever." At Mass, we receive the Bread and Wine of Life given to us as he Body and Blood of Jesus. We seek to forth to be salt to those we encounter.*