

The works of English novelist D. H. Lawrence, represent an extended reflection upon the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization in the early 20th century. In his writings, Lawrence confronts issues relating to emotional health and vitality, spontaneity, and instinct.

Two years before his death, his poem entitled “*Salt of the Earth*” was published. It reads:

Slowly the salt of the earth becomes salt of the sea.

*Slowly the raindrops of appreciation
carry the salt of the earth, the wisdom of wise men,
the gifts of the great*

*down to the ocean of the afterwards,
where it remains as brine*

*in which to pickle the younger generations
who would be so much better without pickling.*

Slowly the salt of the earth becomes salt of the sea.

In today’s Gospel from St. Matthew, Chapter 5 - we hear Our Lord saying:

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.

The Greek word used for “*losing taste*” means “*dull, tasteless*” but is also the root of the English word “*moron*.” A similar meaning exists in both Hebrew and Aramaic where it means “*silly, unseasoned*.”

In the Second Reading, St. Paul is admonishing the Corinthians who were attempting to merge the message of the Gospel with the sophistication of their local philosophies. In a sense, corrupting the Christian message, and creating their own watered-down pseudo-Gospel.

In the First Reading, from the Prophet Isaiah, we come mid-stream into a Word from the mouth of the prophet, that is chastising Israel for only paying lip-service to God. The people have taken to doing the “bare minimum,” where they are living a watered-down, minimalistic interpretation of what God has asked of them.

In the poem “*Salt of the Earth*,” D. H. Lawrence sees the good things in life - the wisdom of the wise, and the gifts of the great ones - being washed away by the ocean of the world, where they are no longer remembered, but become forgotten and unheeded.

Salt has been used for millennia to both season foods, as well as to preserve and stabilize them. Yet too much salt can make foods unpalatable and inedible. And while salt is chemically stable, in the presence of moisture, salt vanishes as it is washed away by water.

When Jesus tells us we are “*salt of the earth*,” we must realize that we need to take care to preserve the Faith entrusted to us at our Baptism, and as “*salt*” we should not to allow ourselves to be diluted by worldly allurements or worldly cares.

Often, we find ourselves pulled in the direction of the Corinthians, trying to integrate our Faith with what we see around us in the world - or else we may be tempted, like Israel in Isaiah’s time, to water-down or minimize the influence of our Faith in our daily lives.

To go in either direction - both of them take us away from the Gospel and weaken our relationship with God and Jesus Christ - would be ... well ... tasteless ... or to use the Greek and Hebrew meanings - “*silly*” or “*moronic*.”

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray that we might persevere in living our Faith. And instead of being influenced by what we see and experience in the world around us, may we let our light “*shine before others*,” and by our presence and actions in the world as both salt and light, may our lives give witness to the Gospel and give glory to God.