

## 5A

*At the time of the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century one of the things which Luther levelled against the Church was that it was concentrating far too much on good works to get to Heaven and paying little or no attention to St Paul's words: "it is only by faith that one is saved".*

As Catholics we teach that faith must be blended with good deeds for us to be saved. Think of the Last Judgement scene, for instance, when we will be judged on works like, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, welcoming the stranger and much more.

In the gospel today, St Matthew re-emphasises this when he says: *"let the light of your faith shine out among men and women so that seeing your good works they may give praise to your Father in Heaven".*

It is important of course that Our Father in Heaven is afforded the praise by our good deeds and not ourselves. St Therese said 'If we go through life without anyone noticing our good deeds, so much the better'. God loves little souls who offer Him the hidden sacrifices of day to day living." So your good works don't have to be grand gestures for all to see. There are countless souls, the light of whose faith shines out in all they do, but who wouldn't want any attention drawn to themselves. They're the real saints.

On the other hand if we say we have faith and our good deeds are few and far between, then we are putting the lamp of our faith 'under the proverbial tub'. St James says that "faith without good works is dead". Actions speak louder than words.

There are other ways that the salt of our faith could become tasteless. We are supposed to love Christ and his church but sometimes we can be less than supportive of the Church,

forgetting the fact it's the Body of Christ we are belittling. Without the Church the light of our faith would be somewhat dimmed and may even go out altogether. We live out our faith in and through the Church. Even the Panto which we all enjoyed this weekend is a good example of reinforcing the unity we have as God's family in a Church setting. Parish social activities, like the Panto cannot be discounted as important ways of letting the light of our faith shine out. It was great to see all the young people and children involved.

Another way the metaphorical salt becomes tasteless is when we're not sufficiently earthed into the parish community but operate as a freelance catholic with little or no connection with our local church where we can get involved in all sorts of good works. I call that 'service station religion' which leaves a lot to be desired. Your involvement in the parish, howsoever small, is invaluable. Even Jesus needed the company and friendship of the apostles to do the good works which the Father sent him to do. He even commended them for this when he said; 'you are the men and women who stood by me when I needed you'.

*So let the salt of our faith not become tasteless so that we can become pleasing to Our Lord and our good works be a light to the wider world in which we live.*