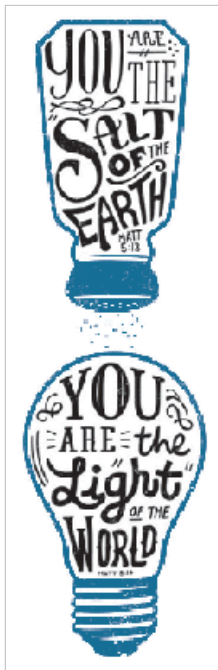


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SALT OF THE EARTH AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD:
CELEBRATING, LISTENING AND WALKING TOGETHER IN A SPIRIT OF COMMUNION
PARTICIPATION AND MISSION. (MATTHEW 5: 13-16)

“The world doesn’t need what women have, it needs what women are.”

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)



The days to follow after Jesus’ discourse are crucial for his disciples. Do the disciples understand what it means to be pruned? Perhaps not, given the fear, apprehension and later loss of faith before the resurrection. The disciples are to endure hardship and suffering through this pruning process in order to stay attached to the true Vine, who is the source of divine life. **In his infinite wisdom, the Lord allows these hardships to befall his followers. His desire is for them to later bear more fruit.**

Post resurrection story – After his conversion St Paul himself is not someone who is readily accepted. The believers fear him but under the mentorship of Barnabas, Paul goes to become one of the greatest disciples of the Lord. He is known by his fruits as he boldly proclaims Christ even as he faces opposition. And with the consolation of the Spirit, the Church grows in numbers.

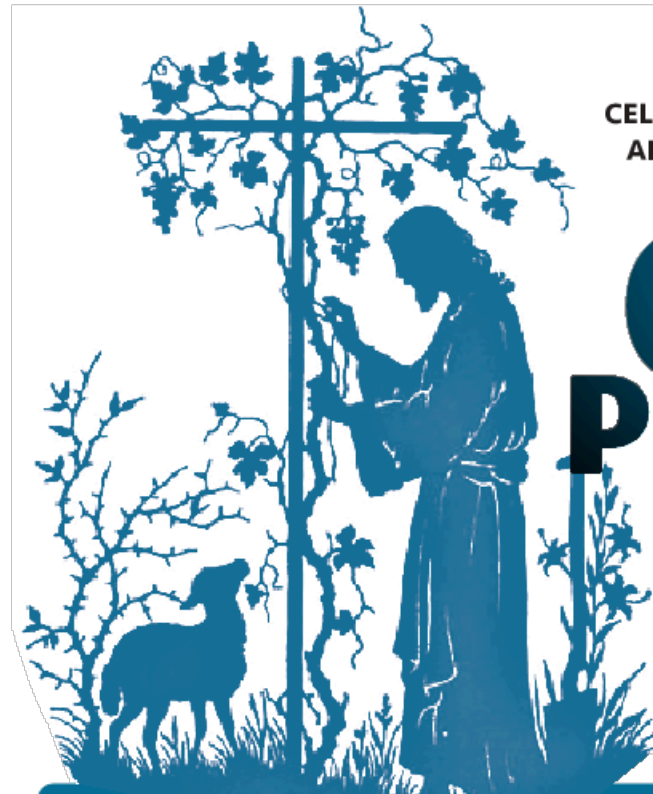
What is our takeaway today? That in baptism we have an organic relationship with Christ. We are joined to Him, and are nourished by His Word and the Sacraments. Like Paul, our lives must bear witness to Jesus and all that we do to reflect Him. And if we are undergoing hardships, take to heart that the suffering is not punitive but transformative.

God prunes us here and there, where necessary because He just wants to shape us into the image of the True Vine, our Lord Jesus Christ. *‘Remain in me, as I in you. Together we will bear much fruit.’* ✚

SCRIPTURE of the DAY

- Acts 9: 26-31
- Psalms 21: 26-28, 30-32
- 1 John 3: 18-24
- John 15: 1-8

MONTHLY FOCUS
CELEBRATING THE DIGNITY
AND VALUE OF WOMEN



God Prunes Us

The gospel narrative in John 15:1-8 is a continuation of the farewell discourse of Jesus. He is intensely preparing his beloved disciples for his imminent departure. In tender words, Jesus tells them to ‘remain in him’, giving an allegory of a vine and its branches. Jesus, the Vine, is himself attached to the Vinedresser, His Father. He says the branches will not survive if they are cut off from the vine. However, in order to bear more fruits, every branch needs to be pruned. The Vinedresser at his discretion will prune the branches accordingly.