

## ***A Refreshing Difference***

***You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. (Matthew 5)***

If a seasoning has no flavor, it has no value. If Christians make no effort to affect the world around them in positive and delightful and caring ways, they are of little value to God. Their own lives grow more and more mundane and lose a sense of direction and purpose. Everything seems bland.

God invites us to be people who make a difference. How do we do that? We start by being the unique person God has created us to be. We start by affirming that if God created us, then there is something wonderful and beautiful in us that no one else can offer to this life. We choose to love and accept ourselves and to search and live out the gift of our uniqueness. Can I cook? Can I clean? Can I encourage? Can I teach? Can I listen? Can I pray? Can I paint? Can I write? Can I organize? Can I smile? Can I hug? Can I play? Can I say "Thank you". Can I compliment? What can I do today with what I have today that will bless others and give me deep satisfaction?

While it is true that failure and disappointment and hurts in our lives have probably removed some of the saltiness from our lives, God is in the business of refreshing and restoring us to "mint" condition. God invites us to receive forgiveness and healing and to start anew. God has a wonderful purpose and plan for our lives that is good. We've often lived up to the demeaning and discouraging words of others around us or our own thoughts. God who knows us best tells us that we are created for good.

***For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created***

***in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2)***

Christians should not blend in with everyone else. Instead, we should affect others positively, just as seasoning brings out the best flavor in food. A famous man, St. Francis of Assisi says it in a prayer this way:

***Lord,  
Make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, pardon  
Where there is doubt, faith  
Where there is despair, hope  
Where there is darkness, light  
Where there is sadness, joy.***

***O Divine Master  
Grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console  
To be loved as to love.***

***For it is in giving that we receive.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.  
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.***

### Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. What is unique about my life that can flavor and enhance the lives of others around me?
2. What keeps me from believing and living as salt and seasoning today?
3. What's my experience of living as a person described in the Prayer of St. Francis?
4. What do I need to do today to grasp the reality that God has created me for good works?
5. What can I try? What can I study? What can I practice? What can I do over again that could help me bring the saltiness back into my life and behaviours?