

**LEADER:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Invite persons present to pause for a few moments of silent recollection and to offer any special intentions.)

Last Sunday, we opened our ears to hear the beatitudes of Jesus, those attitudes which, when lived, make our professed faith a lived, transformational reality. This Sunday's gospel is a continuation of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

To really hear and be moved by this gospel, we need to fine-tune our hearing to the meaning packed into every word. Take for example the first lines of the gospel: "Jesus went up the mountain and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to teach them" At first glance, these seem to be very plain introductory words that simply provide setting and context. If we listen with the ears of our Hebrew ancestors, however, the image of Jesus going up the mountain is a direct and vivid reference to the great deliverer, Moses, going up Mount Sinai to be in God's presence and receive divine instruction on behalf of the Chosen People. Unlike the Hebrew people who could not join Moses on God's mountain, Jesus makes God's presence accessible to all who follow him, and as the Son of God, it is Jesus who instructs us directly in the ways of God. The message from these simple introductory words is unmistakable: there is someone greater than Moses here, someone whose person and message is God's living presence among us.

As from the mountain top, let us proclaim together God's holy Word.

**SIDE 1:** You are the salt of the earth; but if 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.

**SIDE 2:** You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basked, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

**ALL:** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

**LEADER:** Let us pray

**ALL:** Lord Jesus, bless us with your grace. As your salt and your light, we may live the works of your Gospel in our world, transforming it into the mountain of your glorious presence. Amen.