

of the priest symbolises preservation from the corruption of sin. It represents wisdom. in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:13) Jesus says: *“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.”* Salt also symbolises faithfulness and the covenant of friendship: *“...the LORD God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt”* (2 Chronicles 13:5) Holy water has many formal uses. It is used in baptisms, exorcisms, the intermingling with palm ashes, at certain Masses and in funerals. It is also sprinkled on the sick. Making the sign of the Cross with holy water from the font at the entrance to Church witnesses to the renewal of our baptism, the cleansing of venial sin and protection from evil. St Teresa of Avila was a strong proponent of the use of holy water. She wrote: *“From long experience I have learned that there is nothing like holy water to put devils to flight and prevent them from coming back again. They also flee from the cross, but return; so holy water must have great value. For my own part, whenever I take it, my soul feels a particular and most notable consolation.”* **-Stephen S**

**Entrance antiphon: The Lord is the strength of his people, a saving refuge for the one he has anointed. Save your people, Lord, and bless your heritage, and govern them forever.**

**First Reading: Job 38: 1, 8-11**

**Responsorial Psalm: 106: O give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures for ever. /R**

**Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5: 14-17**

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us. Alleluia!**

**Gospel: Mark: 4: 35-41**

**Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**

**Communion Antiphon: The eyes of all look to you, Lord, and you give them their food in due season.**



## Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B, 2024 Weekly Reflection:

**Sacramentals (1): Holy Water:** According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (paras 1668-1670) sacramentals are sacred signs which

bear a resemblance to the sacraments. Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it. Some examples of sacramentals are blessings and various forms of piety such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross and the rosary. Two others are holy water and incense.

From as early as the first books of the Old Testament, priests were said to purify people and places by sprinkling them with water. So, for example, in Numbers 19:18, the purification of a tent after the death of an inhabitant in it requires that: *“a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the furnishings, and upon the persons who were there..”* Jewish practice mandated ritual cleansing with water in many other instances such as before/after offering sacrifices and on entering the temple. From this it may be presumed that the early Christians similarly used water for purification and expiation. Running water was then used for baptism, but the first evidence of use of holy water dates from the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century where there are records of the blessing of oil and water during Mass and the use of holy water for blessings and for curative purposes.

Holy water comprises two elements, water and salt. Water has many significances. Its cleansing and purifying properties remind us of our baptism and of the need to purify our souls from sin. As Psalm 51 v 7 says: *“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”*. Water also satisfies thirst. It refreshes and gives life to all living beings. The salt with which water is mixed when the water is sanctified by the blessing