

(Food for thought)

Gospel: Luke 17: 5-10.

A little can go a long way



The Apostles in today's gospel voice their sense of urgent need to Jesus. It takes enormous faith to live Jesus' teachings and face the demands of discipleship - the demands of simple service to others, or that of reconciling and forgiving. A disciple can easily feel inadequate. He or she wants more faith so that they can be the kind of disciples Jesus is teaching them to be.

But Jesus shifts our attention away from thinking about quantity to considering the quality of the faith we already have. Faith is not something that we can have more or less of. If we have faith the size of a mustard seed - the tiniest seed of all - we can move mountains. This is not a rebuke by Jesus; it is a gentle reminder of what we have already received as gift.

Faith doesn't have to increase - as much as exist. Having faith doesn't automatically give the believer the power to perform crowd-pleasing spectator or life-saving miracles. But faith does mean that we are in touch with God and experience God as the source of that energy which enables us to live good lives, marked by the ability to forgive - as we ourselves have been forgiven; to reach out to one another - as we ourselves have been found and embraced by God.

In a culture that is increasingly more fragmented and torn apart, giving ourselves over into His hands, learning to follow Christ, to find God in our daily lives and to truly live the life of discipleship is no easy feat. It is only when we allow our own weaknesses and ordinariness to be transformed by the hand of God, only when we take our "mustard-seed faith" back into our day-to-day struggles that we will be able to enter into the grace-filled living to which people of every age have been called.

Yet despite this, the Lord has confidently chosen us to complete His work.

"Lord, give me strength... a little patience is all I ask... give me faith."

