

27th Sunday Ordinary Time – C – 2019
Habakkuk 1.2-3;2.2-4///2Tim 1.6-8;13-14///Luke 17.5-10

→Sister Barbara was sitting by the window of her second floor convent apartment one evening opening her mail....she received a letter from home and with it was a \$100 bill.

→as she finished reading the letter... she happened to glanced out the window and saw a shabbily dressed man down by the street leaning on the lamppost.

→looking like he needed the money more than she did, she wrote on a piece of paper “Don’t Despair, Sister Barbara,” wrapped the \$100 bill in the note, and getting his attention, threw it down to him.

→he picked it up, read it and hurriedly walked away

→the next day Sister Barbara was told there was a man at the door wanting to see her.

→when she went to the door, there was very the same man waiting for her...and without a word he handed her a wad of \$100 bills

→ “what’s this,” she asked.... And he said “that’s the \$8,000 you have coming Sister” he replied.... “Don’t Despair came in first and paid 80 to 1!!!

→**don’t despair**....seems to fit today’s theme...because you can certainly hear despair in today’s first reading....

Habakkuk prays... “how long, O Lord...I cry for help but you do not listen!” to which God answers (as always) ... “trust, have faith...and be patient.”

→And then in the Gospel reading...the apostles ask Jesus...to “increase their faith”....and Jesus answers their request by telling them...even the smallest amount of faith...can cause great things to happen....

→then Jesus describes what FAITH is suppose to be like...with the point being that FAITH...our FAITH needs to be rooted in genuine...straightforward...service to those in need.

→....the startling answer Jesus' gives to the disciples is because they were looking for an easy way to increase their faith... to make it stronger...and to make it more real...

→and the answer Jesus gives....is not meant to be sarcastic or cynical but more so his answer is meant to reveal to the disciples and to you and me that when it comes to faith...we just can't increase it on a whim

→very often we find ourselves in similar situations especially at times in our lives when we are faced with tragedy, illness, death, or some other event shakes us....like the disciples...we ask the very same question....."INCREASE OUR FAITH"

→However, as the disciples learn today, we too must realize that FAITH is **not** something we earn, or easily increase...but rather....our faith in God...our faith in one another has to be seen as a precious gift from God..... that cannot be bought or manipulated or earned

PAUSE

→I think the common mistake we often make, it to think of our "faith" in a quantitative way

→i.o.w.....we describe our faith...or the faith of others in terms of quantity

“what great faith he has....or....I sure wish I had the faith that you have...or.....how can I get faith like yours...and so on

→and we have this idea....this notion that the more you have....the stronger your faith.....the better you are

→and so.....we go around spending a great deal of energy trying to increase our faith, to get more of it

→yet what Jesus means when he speaks to his disciples and to you and me today.....is that "faith" is not something you get more of....it's not something that you increase in terms of amount

→but more so our faith...is a gift from God

→it is something that we all have and possess

and so.....the challenge or task before us is to now cultivate and develop it...to make it stronger.....and vibrant...and more alive

→it is very similar to this example

→ imagine if you would that each of us, was given just 1 gallon of water to use for the entire next week

every one of us had same amount of water to use for the entire next week...what would you do with it.....

→some of us might use the water to drink

→some to wash

→others to water plants so there would be more food

→some might save it

→[and] some might give it away to those who need it

→regardless however and whatever the case may be.....every one of us had same amount, to use in the way we thought best (whether good or bad)

→well imagine that same image... but this time replace the water with the gift of faith,

→we all have same amount, freely given to each one of us...and now our job [our challenge] is to make the best use of that gift

→to make the best use of our faith.....to make ourselves and those around us more aware of God's presence and love

PAUSE

→you see....faith...is simply the conviction on our part, that no matter what happens in life, God is present and active in every moment

→**and we need to constantly be reminded of that presence,**

→that is what faith does.....so to increase our faith in any way.... I would say means to increase the quality of it and not so much the quantity

PAUSE

→people will often ask me... “how can I get more faith in God”.....and what [I believe] they are really asking is how can the faith... I have... improve....

→how can I change the quality of my faith....how can I change what I do with the gift that I have been given...how can I make my faith meaningful and vibrant and alive....

→and this a challenge that all of us need to work on every day

→a challenge that perhaps that can be met....simply by spending as little as 5 minutes a day reflecting on such things as:

---what can I thank God for during the last 24 hours

---or what sins may I have committed in last 24 hours

---what does God want me to do in the next 24 hours

---or whom should I pray for in the next 24 hours

→you see.....spending 5 minutes a day reflecting on questions such as these can change our faith...and make it stronger and more meaningful

→and that is what Jesus is talking about in today's gospel.

PAUSE

simply put....our task as people and as followers of Christ is to increase our faith

but not by getting more if it...but instead by making what we already have come alive in our hearts and souls here and now....every day!

→so that we too might one day move a mulberry tree....with faith.....the size of a mustard seed.