

27TH SUNDAY ORD. (C) **THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY THEIR FAITH**

The three readings we just heard are centered on faith. One of the three most important or greatest gifts of the Holy Spirit is faith; St. Paul told the Corinthians: "There are three things that last forever; faith, hope, and love," (1Cor.13:13). The letter to the Hebrews explains what faith is: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen," (Heb.11:1). Thus, it can be said that faith deals with unseen things more than things which are seen.

At the time of Habakkuk, Israel was faced with imminent war and troubles, and they felt their world was going to fall apart. But through the prophet, God urged the Israelites not to give up hope. The promise of deliverance might delay but it would be fulfilled; "if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late. The rash one has no integrity; but the just one, because of his faith, shall live". This means that faith calls for patience and trust.

The answer Jesus gave to the apostles when they told Him to increase their faith, shows that faith can do what is humanly impossible. It is a very powerful force which can bring unexpected results. Hebrews chapter eleven (11) enumerates what many people in the scriptures accomplished by faith starting with Abel, then Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Judges, David, the apostles, and women and men martyrs.

St. Paul advised Timothy not to be ashamed of testifying to the Lord. "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control". Looking at the life of Abraham, it is clear that faith drives away fear and cowardice. He was not afraid to leave his father's house to a place he did not know, (Gen.12:1-2) and he was not worried about sacrificing his son Isaac, (Gen.22:1-8). By faith Simon Peter could walk on the water for a while, (Mt.14:28-31).

True worship of God needs faith. This is because no one has seen God, and it is only Jesus, the Son of God who has seen Him and knows who He

really is. It is through faith that we can accept Jesus as God. Jesus healed many people because of their faith in Him. Example is the healing of the beggar; “Jesus told him, have your sight; your faith has saved you,” (Lk. 18:42). ‘He often looked for faith both in those who came to Him for help and in His disciples. He taught that faith holds great power even when it comes in a form as tiny as a mustard seed’. The seventy (or seventy-two) disciples sent by Jesus were surprised at what they could accomplish. “The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord in your name even the demons submit to us,’” (Lk.10:17).

We always profess faith in the Trinity, but how does that affect our daily lives? Like the Israelites, when we see problems all around us, what do we do? Do we wait upon the Lord or do we rash to do things? When we trust in God’s words and in His help, we are able to do great and even impossible things. This is because He endows us with His grace, and the Holy Spirit inspires and strengthens us.

How does faith affect your attending Mass every week, and your daily prayers? What role does faith play in your relationships, either with your family or friends? Are you driven by your faith to seek the face of God in all your activities, especially when things seem to be hopeless? Are we living by faith or by sight? The righteous shall live by their faith.