

St Pius & St Anthony 27th Sunday Ordinary Time Year C(2025) Luke

It seems a simple enough request of the apostles: “Increase our Faith” But I pick up a subtle pushiness from them, and a similar pushback from Jesus to them. Again, “Increase our Faith”. Is that kind of like when we pray, “*God, give me more patience, **NOW!***” what I pick up, is a presumptuousness from the apostles, and Jesus returning a scolding response to them. To emphasize that tone I hear in their exchange, I compare their back and forth to like when a parent is pouring juice or drink into a cup for a child, and the child says, “More, fill it up”, but the parent responds, “No, drink what you have first, then I will pour more for you.” So, Jesus is telling the apostles, “You can get more, but use well first what you have and the rest will come.” I suspect divine wisdom on display here, similar to how caterers know about minimizing the waste of food and drink by using smaller cups & plates initially. They know the waste increases in proportion to the larger size of cup/plate. Anyone who has cleared tables at a banquet knows this when you have the tall solo cups and so many of them are still half full, (which is another problem, because then you need not only a trash can pulled along with you as you clear the tables, but also a tub to pour the liquid in, or else your trash bag is going to leave a wet track trail along the floor, all the way out to the dumpster!)

So, Jesus, says to them, “What you have, even if little, will go a long way-use it”. Faith even the size of a mustard seed, if activated (acted on) can uproot mulberry trees and move them into the sea, and I suppose nurture them with life even in the salt water there! By Jesus bringing up a mustard seed, I hear Him, (saying ‘keep it simple’), I hear Him bringing the apostles back down to earth, to basics. They have been getting a little ahead of themselves, obsessed about the more grandiose and spectacular ‘wonders’ ‘works’ miraculous spectacles in His ministry. (this is why Jesus brings up all the good ‘servant’ talk). Jesus is sensing from them, some ego-inflation, that they may be caught up in the more showy signs, marvels in His ministry. Now they had been part of some of big things so far, like Jesus’ miraculous food distribution (Jesus multiplied them, but then handed the food to the apostles for delivery to the people) the loaves & fish in Luk 9:10-17. And some of them had witnessed the ‘glory revelation’ on the Transfiguration Mount in 9:28-36 when Jesus shined in all His divinity. And they had been with Him, with many other wonders and miracles He demonstrated. But I suggest that Jesus has been hearing their talk become bolder and bolder without warrant, that they were getting a little full of themselves (their taste so far of authority in Jesus’ name, has fed their greed for more and more). This hunger grab for more power, was expressed in their boasting about casting out demons when they were sent on mission in Luke 10:17, they came back bragging “*Lord, even the*

demons are subject to us because of your name". And they had previously tried to squeeze some other unknown minsters off the stage (push them out of the picture), in Luke 9:49, trying to throw their weight around saying, *"Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow in our company."* And then even worse, in Luke 9:54 when they had arrogantly suggested violence to Jesus, about vindictively calling fire down on a Samaritan village. Jesus **strongly** rebuked them over that. So they had been building up (their egos) to this attention-seeking request we hear today: "Increase our Faith!" So, Jesus gently brings them down a notch, suggesting 'even a mustard seed' accomplishes great things! But they needed to realize that in fact, they hadn't been **acing** (A) the test of faith up until now. Back in Luke 8:22-25, Jesus had pointedly asked them, ***"Where is your faith?"*** after they lost it and panicked in a storm on the sea, and waking him up, terrified, as he slept peacefully in the boat, after which he calmed their storm. And then in Luke 9:41 He had lamented about them too, "O faithless and perverse generation", after a man brought a complaint to Jesus, that his disciples weren't able to cast a demon out of his sick boy. Jesus took care of it but the apostles couldn't manage it.

So I find that this accounts for why Jesus takes a moment to talk them back to the basics, and talk about genuine service of God. Get back to a spirit of serving! What does a servant of God do? Does a servant brag about work done? No. Does a servant seek out the glory/front line titles for credit? No. A servant just takes care of the tasks in front of him/her as the Master had assigned them. Jesus' example of a servant coming in from the field, and what should that servant expect – to be seated at banquet table? No, just start your second shift of work (from the field work, to now-the table work) and get the master's dinner ready and serve it. On to the next thing. A good servant is ever ready for the next task – "What can I do for you next?" That is what servants do. I hear Jesus calling His apostles and all of us (who claim to be 'disciple- followers' of His), to keep humble, servant-minded dispositions about us. Service of God is not done for reward or recognition, pay or privilege. It is done for the glory of God, because it is right and good itself, and its what God asked of us! The holy attitude of the servant in His parable, is what we should reflect, ***"We are unprofitable servants just doing what we were commanded"*** When I hear them, I think that sounds just like so many of our modern day heroes, like our police, first responders and emergency helpers, (also our military's soldiers) who when they are complimented about their rescues or help in danger, they typically respond, "That is what we do", like when the person pulls somebody out of a burning car/house, and they are told they are a hero, and they say back, "No I just did what needed to be done, what anybody would have done in my circumstance."

Well , maybe, maybe not, but their humility and service is to be commended. And thanked! Jesus says we should have that same attitude about service to God. It is what God assigns to us, what He has called us to do. When I think of Jesus' response, I hear echo of my mom when I was little, maybe when I thought I would work up to getting a special toy or favor (like 'can I spend the night at Scott's house?") I would jump into a task, pre-emptively, (like buttering her up) and go to her saying, "Mom, I did the dishes already, washed, dried and put them away" And she would say, "Well, good, that is what you are supposed to do" No credit – and no sleep over permission at Scotts! It was expected. Jesus wants us to keep that same 'servant-mindedness'. Do, what He calls us to! Serve as He served (He who washes the feet of His servants-disciples at the Last Supper! Jn 13). To follow Him!

Disciples Argue about who is greatest,
Luke 9:48 "he takes child," For the one who is least among all of you is the
one who is the greatest."

Again, after arguing about who is greater
Luke 22:27 "For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves?

Is it not the one seated at table? ***I am among you as the one who serves.***"As Jesus observes, "For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? But I am among you as one who serves" (22:24-30; cf. Matthew 20:24-28; 19:28; Mark 10:41-45).

Be ever ready and vigilant a servant
Luke 12: 37 "Blessed are those servants whom the master *finds vigilant* on his
arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them."