



Volume 6

THE Voice

ST. PAUL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Parish Priest Message

GROWING IN FAITH

HEBREWS 11

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

I was amazed to hear some of the Parishioners saying that they are going for spiritual retreats and pilgrimages during their holidays, in their home countries. I really understand from this fact, when we take faith seriously, we know, there are no holidays only HOLYDAYS. Building faith or deepening our faith is a continual process, every day and all the time.

I begin with the basics of faith from the letter to the Hebrews: *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen... And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."* (Heb. 11:1, 6)

Heb 11:6 tells us that *"without faith, it is impossible to please God"*. Since pleasing God is essential to an abundant life, building our faith is a natural step. We are living in a world where the temptation to doubt God is constant. We need more than ever to learn how to trust in His goodness and have strong faith by deepening our faith.

Deepening faith is planned and intentional. It is not instant – it grows in stages. We know that children grow through developmental stages. They learn to breathe first. Then they learn to eat, then to walk and finally to talk. No child has ever taken those out of order. They are developmental steps. Likewise, the Christian has certain development steps too. You've got to learn to breathe, then eat, then walk and then talk. They always come in a certain order. There are no short cuts to maturity. Rick Warren, a spiritual writer, notes: *"The development of Christ-like character cannot be rushed. Spiritual growth, like physical growth, takes time."*

Building our faith in God is the greatest spiritual desire or the greatest need we have as faithful people. God wants us to grow by deepening our faith. Spiritual growth is also one of God's greatest desires for us so that we live in Him. In fact, spiritual growth is essential to the life of a Christian, just as physical growth is essential to the life of a child. If you are not growing, then you're dying.



What does deepening faith mean? **Deepening faith involves a personal faith in Jesus.** It includes witnessing to the Christian faith and recognizing God's presence in daily experiences and the importance of faith in both joyous and challenging times. How do we deepen our faith? We can **deepen our faith by deepening our relationship with God**, which may be done in different ways, like: (a) Get to know who God is - by reading the Bible; (b) Spend time with God - through our prayer; (c) Live out your love for God - by loving obedience; (d) Live out God's love for others - by serving others; (e) Enjoy the gifts, God has given us - by living with gratitude.

There are many ways to build or deepen our faith. I would like to point out four ways to build or deepen our faith:

1. Start with a Prayer and Be grateful to what you have.

When we stand face to face with spiritual obstacles or challenges and feel the crushing weight of our burdens, it causes us to forget what God has already done for us. A simple way to keep our focus on God in those moments is to start with a prayer and be grateful to God for what He has done.

2. Believe in God's Promises: Difficult things often arrive suddenly in our lives, as if dropping out of the sky onto our path. All we can see at that moment is a mountain. It blocks our progress and our vision of what lies ahead. When we focus on the mountain, we lose faith in God. Hence believe in God's promises and focus on Him.

We do have several examples in the Bible, church history as well as in our personal experience, of God's children overcoming obstacles with His help. Ask God to give the strength to climb our mountain or make a way through to the other side. As God takes us by the hand and leads us to victory, our trust will soon overshadow all our mountains.

3. Trust God's Plans: When we receive bad news or come face to face with a difficult circumstance, often it shakes us to our core and fear sets in. A perfect way to build the kind of faith that does not fail, is to always trust in God's plans. He knows our future and has plans to prosper us. Life-shattering moments are no surprise to God, even if tears fill our path, yet trust Him all the time.

4. Surrender our Trust to God: The sin of self-reliance or dependence on worldly powers is a prime example of lacking trust in God. If we are not trusting God, then our faith is based on something else. Having faith in other things restricts the power of God in our life. Eventually, we are disappointed because of human limitations. In such moments we need to note the areas of our life in which we have not surrendered into God's hands and then ask Him to take control. Surrender our life to God's plans and God's ways. This will help us to grow our faith because we learn that His ways are far better than anything we could have imagined. Such a surrender results in a stronger faith and a deeper trust in God.

Fr. Maxim Cardoza, OFM, Cap
Parish Priest-Musaffah

Beyond the Time

In the book of Ecclesiastes - Chapter 3, the writer in his wisdom narrates a beautiful poetic thought as below.

"There is a season for everything, A time for every occupation under heaven:

A time for giving birth, A time for dying.

A time for planting, A time for uprooting what has been planted.

A time for killing, A time for healing; A time for knocking down, A time for building.

A time for tears, A time for laughter; A time for mourning, A time for dancing.

A time for throwing stones away, A time for gathering them.

A time for embracing A time to refrain from embracing.

A time for searching, A time for losing; A time for keeping, A time for discarding.

A time for tearing, A time for sewing; A time for keeping silent, A time for speaking.

A time for loving, A time for hating; A time for war, A time for peace.

And the writer concludes thus

"All that he does is apt for its time; but although he has given us an awareness of the passage of time, we can grasp neither the beginning nor the end of what God does." Time belongs to God. It is true that the Lord does what is apt for our life at the right time.

On the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. And they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the feast had all been used, and the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said, 'Woman, what do you want from me? My hour has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' (John 2: 1 – 5).

When Jesus was requested by his mother to start his public mission, perhaps he believed his time to perform miracles has not yet come. But then he knew that the Time has indeed come because there was a need in that family. The Family had to be saved from a shame that such an incident could bring in among their neighbours. For the consequence expected, they could become a laughingstock in their locality. Jesus knew that it was his time to reveal his glory for the sake of the people in need so that they could experience the joy of life. Even as we pass through different seasons of our life as described in Ecclesiastes, the incident of Cana lead us to understand that Jesus invites us NOW and FOREVER to rejoice in the new wine of the Holy Spirit. The Lord whom we trust is above Time. Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be forever. (Hebrews 13:8)



Prayer Lord God, you are the Alpha and Omega. All things exist for you and in you. Help me to rejoice in the new wine of the Holy Spirit now and at every moment. Amen

Vijayan. A



AUGUST-2023

From the book of 'Acts of the Apostles' - Chapters 9 to 12

- 1) For how many days was Saul blind?
- 2) What was the name of the woman disciple who lived, died and was brought alive in Joppa?
- 3) After the vision in noon time, to whose house did Peter go.
- 4) Who predicted that there would be a severe famine all over the world?
- 5) What was the name of the Apostle killed by sword in Herod's rule?

Your answers along with your name, age and contact details shall be submitted at the parish office on or before 1st September 2023.

OR

Email: voiceofstpauls@gmail.com

Winner of Bible Quiz July-2023

Ashlyn Theresa Bijoy

Aug 3: Baptism seminar

Aug 4: St. John Mary Vianney

Aug 6: Transfiguration of the Lord (Feast)

Aug 10: St. Lawrence

Aug 10-12: Christeen Retreat

Aug 14-25: Vacation Bible Study

Aug 15: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Solemnity)

Aug 24: St. Bartholomew, Apostle (Feast)

Aug 25: Wedding anniversary thanksgiving mass.

Church Events



Photo Corner



Wedding Anniversary Mass during the month of July-2023



Feast of St. Paul Celebration 02 07 2023



Feast of St Paul -Tamil Community



Feast of St Paul - Filipino Community



Feast of St Paul -Sri Lankan Community



Feast of St Paul -Konkani Community