



Some reflections inspired by online copyrighted commentaries and homilies

October 2, 2022

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

The apostles in today's gospel are worried about their faith. Perhaps they are beginning to realize that when they arrive in Jerusalem, events will lead to the cross. Maybe it is beginning to dawn on them, how much strength they will need if they are to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth. Whatever the reason, they are feeling short on faith. So they say to the Lord, "Increase our faith." They are not confident that the faith they have is enough. The apostles' fear is ours as well. When we look forward to the challenges we will have to face, the problems that lie on the horizon, how can we be sure that our faith will be strong enough to get us through?

One of the blessings of being a priest is that you are able to walk with people through crisis situations. I remember the most challenging of times were during the Hurricane Katrina evacuation. I found myself being a priest of 14 months faced with a crisis situation that I never expected to encounter. Spending days stranded on the interstate above stagnant flood waters with 100s of people and parishioners and nowhere to go truly challenged people's faith. In retrospective, I realized that unshakable faith was what I expended. In that situation trust in God is all you have. Through those days of waiting to be rescued people crying, asking for my prayers, awake day, and night worried, caring for sick, and experiencing some dying, your faith is shaken, priest or not. However, as we hear in the second reading, "God did not give us a Spirit of cowardice but rather power, love and self-control...in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus". It that little bit of faith that dwells in each one of us those people were able to endure and wait on the Lord.

Because in today's gospel, he tells the disciples that their faith need only be as big as a mustard seed, only a little bit of faith. That will be sufficient. That makes today's gospel one of confidence and hope. If you are facing a crisis in your family, for which you can see no solution—a marriage coming apart at the seams, a child or a grandchild who has lost their way—Jesus asks us to pull together just a little faith. That will make a difference. If you are bereaved by the loss of someone you loved in life and can see no future ahead of you, if you look into the future and realize that if you live into your 90's your health is going to fail, your strength will be reduced, and you will be dependent on others, Jesus says, "Gather together whatever faith you can find, and give it to me. We will face the future together."

It is so comforting in our life situations to know that the Lord is with us, all we have to develop is enough faith to believe and trust. Occasionally we think that our faith must be like that of Blessed Mary or the angels in heaven in order to cope with life. Jesus tells us today that our faith does not. Our faith need only be as big as a mustard seed. That will be enough because God will make up the difference.